

The Illustrated London News

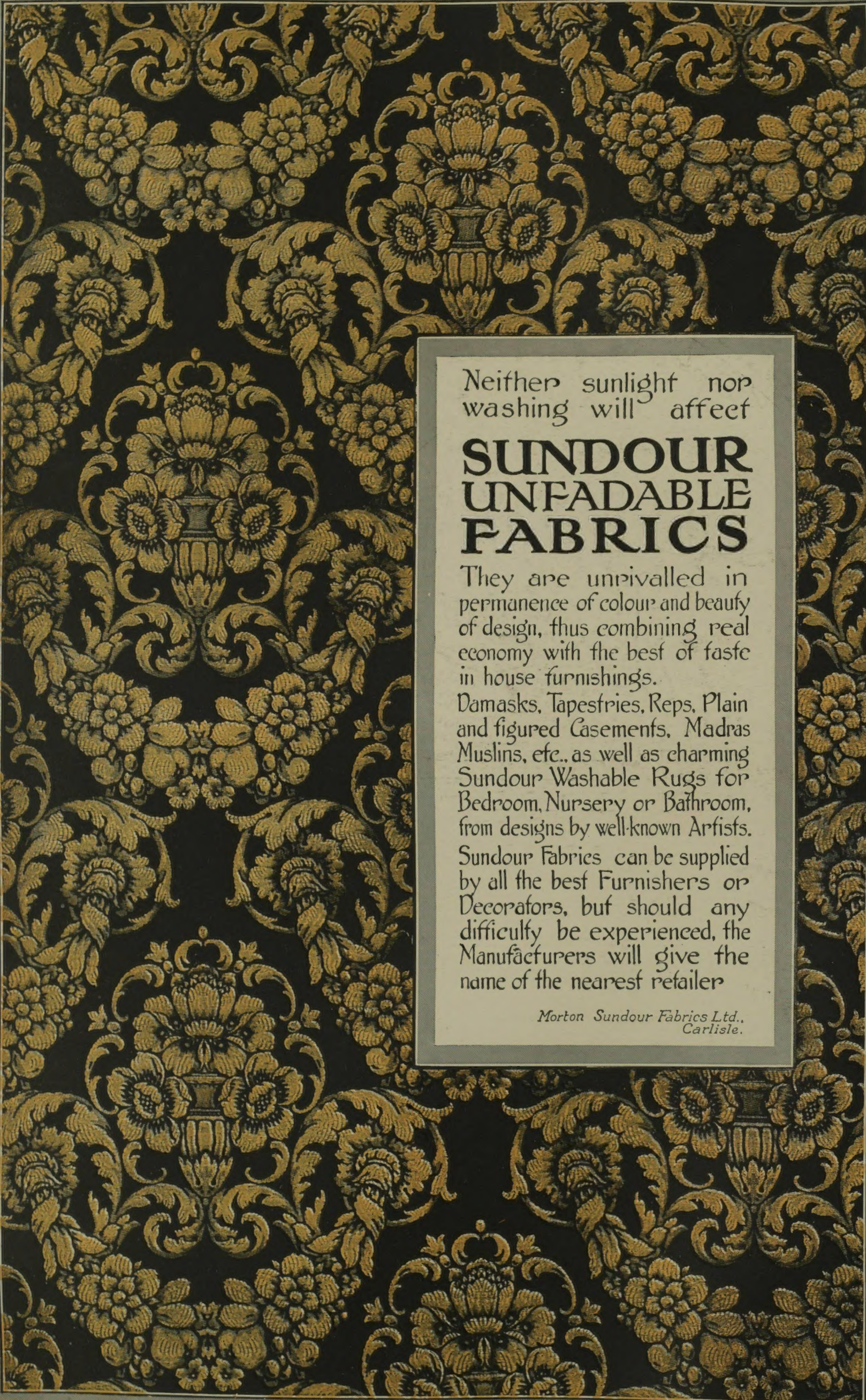


1923

THE BLUE BIRD. From the Salon Picture by F.M. Roganeau

2/-

Christmas Number



Neither sunlight nor
washing will affect

SUNDOUR UNFADABLE FABRICS

They are unrivalled in
permanence of colour and beauty
of design, thus combining real
economy with the best of taste
in house furnishings.

Damasks, Tapestries, Reps, Plain
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Muslins, etc., as well as charming
Sundour Washable Rugs for
Bedroom, Nursery or Bathroom,
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Sundour Fabrics can be supplied
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*Morton Sundour Fabrics Ltd.,
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The Illustrated London News

Christmas Number



AFTER THE NOCTURNAL VISIT OF FATHER CHRISTMAS: "CHILDHOOD'S SLUMBERS."
From the Photograph, "La Nuit de Noël," by Achille Bologna, Torino. (Copyright Reserved.)

OUR CHRISTMAS CHAPMAN CRIES HIS WARES.

Now, what d'ye lack, my Masters all,
Good Matrons, bonnie Misses,
Brave Boys, who throng my Christmas stall,
And dream of cakes and kisses?
What would ye fancy, sweet my fairs,
By way of Yule-tide fairing?
Come, buy; for I've the choicest wares
'Twixt Paul's and Cross of Charing!

My Sign it is the Sign of Paul;
These eighty years* last May-time
I've trafficked 'neath the Cross and Ball;
The wide world's work-and-play-time
Has found its true account with me:
And extra-dainty dishes
At glad Noël I spread for ye
With all good Christmas wishes.

For young and old I've something here:
There's master-craft in stories
And pictures eke. Old friends appear
And new, in greater glories.
A touch of old Hans Andersen
You'll find, or I'm no true man,
And, limned with artist's brush and pen,
The harmonies of Schumann.

Here's store of wondrous things and quaint
To tempt your inclination.
My gallant squires who write and paint
Have wrought to admiration.
I've pages decked in antique way
As gorgeous as a Missal.
Come, buy; I vow ye shall not pay
Too dearly for your whistle!

*"The Illustrated London News" was founded in May 1842.



A Christmas Carol

modernised.
 "Would they let him in! It is a mercy they didn't shake his arm off. They would have done . . . but under each arm were tucked tins, the biggest tins he could buy . . . of the toffee he was sure they would like best . . . Mackintosh's it was."

"Then Scrooge slapped his nephew on the back, a resounding slap. 'Merry Christmas! Happy Christmas! I mean it. I do, really. Every word of it. All good things to you . . . and I've brought some of them with me!'"

EVERYBODY enjoys Mackintosh's Toffee de Luxe so much all the year round that when Christmas comes they cannot possibly enjoy it more, so they enjoy more of it.

Make sure of your full share of Mackintosh's Toffee de Luxe this Christmas—order early, for all the family.

Nine Varieties—All Delicious.

Toffee de Luxe—Egg and Cream de Luxe—Almond Toffee de Luxe—Cocoanut de Luxe—Café de Luxe—Mint de Luxe—Real Fruit Toffee de Luxe—Old English Toffee de Luxe—De Luxe Assortment.
 By weight 8d. per $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. Also in Tins.



**Mackintosh's
 Toffee de Luxe
 means a Christmas de Luxe.**

MADE BY JOHN MACKINTOSH & SONS, LTD., HALIFAX.



B.L.
GOLD LABEL
Scotch
Whisky

15/- per Bottle
Pre-War Quality &
Strength: 25 u.p.

A whisky of fine
character for the
occasions of old-
fashioned friendly
hospitality.

BULLOCH, LADE & COMPANY
GLASGOW *Sole Proprietor: Duncan MacLeod* *LONDON*



"Life is not mere living, but the enjoyment of health."

MARTIAL

This eloquent phrase expresses the purpose of

ENO'S "FRUIT SALT"

—to enable people to enjoy life by maintaining healthful conditions of body. For over half a century ENO'S "Fruit Salt" has been doing this with world-wide success.

THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS

CHRISTMAS NUMBER



THE HEROINE OF THE OLD CHRISTMAS
HARLEQUINADE: COLUMBINE.

CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE

By
Valentine Williams,

Author of "The Man With the Clubfoot," "Clubfoot the Avenger," "The Orange Divan," etc., etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY W. R. S. STOTT.



MR. Albert Edward Birkinshaw, a rather prim figure in his alpaca coat, black tie, and well-worn dark-grey trousers, handed the card back to the office-boy.

"Mr. Salsbrigg is engaged," he said. "Anyway, he doesn't see people except by appointment; you know that as well as I do, Percy. Tell him to write in."

"'Sjes' wot I told 'im, Mr. Birkinshaw, but 'e sez: 'You tell the boss it's Mr. Claud Merritone,' 'e sez, 'an' 'e'll see me quick enough,' 'e sez."

"I can't help what *he* says, Percy," rejoined Mr. Birkinshaw, in the mild tone that was familiar to him. "A rule is a rule. He'll have to write for an appointment!"

"Guv'nor busy?" said a voice.

Mr. Birkinshaw looked up from the high desk which, during the working days of sixteen years, he had occupied in the clerks' office at Mr. Salsbrigg's. Mr. Salsbrigg liked to call it the clerks' office, though, in reality, it was the principal of the three rooms which Mr. Salsbrigg rented in Casino House, E.C.2, for his many enterprises.

A tall man, wearing a waisted overcoat, white doeskin gloves, and a top-hat that shone with some extraneous lubricant rather than its own innate effulgence, stood in the doorway. He had a sallow face, a small black moustache, and a pair of dark and restless eyes.

"Mr. Salsbrigg is engaged," said the clerk severely.

"Righto!" remarked the stranger easily, "I'll wait!"

And he dropped into the chair at the typewriter which Miss Ruby Pattinson, the typist—"my secretary," Mr. Salsbrigg was fond of calling her—had vacated for the purpose of clearing away the office tea.

"It's no good waiting," said Mr. Birkinshaw, peering at the stranger over his pince-nez. "Mr. Salsbrigg won't see you without you have an appointment. That's his inflexible rule, and . . ."

But voices resounded from the other side of the door in the glass partition separating the clerks' room from Mr. Salsbrigg's sanctum.

"I'll let you out by my private door into the corridor, Mr. Goldstein!"

"That's all right. I put me 'at down in the outer office, thank yer."

Mr. Goldstein appeared at the door, as black and sleek and squat as the other, who was ushering him out, was rubicund and fat and burly.

"Good-day to you," said Salsbrigg, in velvety, throaty tones, "and glad I am that everything is satisfactorily settled. It has been a pleasure to do business with you, Mr. Goldstein."

The Jew wagged his head humorously as he buttoned up his overcoat.

"A terrible hard man, you are," he sighed. "We're all mugs when we're up against a tough proposition like you, Salsbrigg!"

Mr. Salsbrigg's florid face was wreathed in a gratified smile that sent the wrinkles sagging across his features from the narrow blue eyes down to the receding chin that sloped into the folds of the pink throat.

"Very good, ha-ha! Oh, very good!" he exclaimed, rubbing his hands. "You're a deep one, Goldstein. I'd have to get up very early in the morning to make money out of a hot case like you. Good-evening, friend Goldstein, good-evening! Going to be wet again, I fear! Percy, Mr. Goldstein's hat!"

All smiles, he waved a fat hand as the Jew stumped his way across the office. But when the plump bowed back had disappeared, the friendliness fled from the pink face.

"Mr. Birkinshaw, I want you," Mr. Salsbrigg snapped, and went back into his room. As the clerk, blinking mildly, followed him across the threshold, the tornado struck him full.

"Are you mad, Mr. Birkinshaw?" shouted the throaty voice, now grown fiercely irate. "Have you taken to drink? Miss Pattinson says you're the dam' fool that gave Goldstein an appointment after banking hours. You know he's the crookedest little reptile in the trade: you know that I take nothing but hard cash from the likes of him; and yet, just because I'm up in Manchester, you let him come here and saddle me with a matter of eighteen hundred pound and the bank shut. Don't you answer me back, Mr. Birkinshaw! I've only got to go out on Finsbury Pavement and whistle on my fingers, and I can get twenty, two hundred clerks as good as you. As good? By God, a dam' sight better! Here I sit sweating my guts out day after day, trying to make both ends meet, with trade as flat as flat, and the City that rotten you couldn't float a cork, and there's not a man in the office I can depend on! Has it occurred to you, may I know, that there will be a matter of eighteen hundred pound in that safe from now until to-morrow morning?"

"I'm shore I'm very sorry, Mr. Salsbrigg," faltered the clerk, "but I didn't realise that Mr. Goldstein would settle in cash . . ."

"Didn't realise? My God!—" a fist crashed heavily down on the desk, "you're no more use than a sick headache!"

"What a noise you're making, Alfred!"

The pale face of the stranger suddenly appeared round the glass door. As abruptly as it had broken out, the tornado ceased to rage. A rather stiff smile brightened Mr. Salsbrigg's red face.

"Come in, Claud," he said feebly, and, addressing the clerk, he added: "You want to smarten yourself up, Mr. Birkinshaw; dull, that's what you are—and half asleep!"

The door shut with a bang, and Mr. Birkinshaw returned to his desk, his head in a whirl. Inwardly he reproached himself bitterly. Why did he always let old Salsbrigg take him unawares? Why did those calm, unanswerable retorts to his employer's insulting gibes only occur to him after the storm was past and Salsbrigg, having vented his ill-humour on his three-pound-ten a week employee, had returned to his wonted air of Olympic condescension in his treatment of him?

"Old man got his rag out again?" said Cradock, the other clerk, who was brushing his long fair hair before the office glass.

"Yes," said Birkinshaw. "It's more than flesh and blood will stand, Crad, as some day he'll find out, the—the devil!"

"My word, Mr. Birkinshaw," said Miss Pattinson, a chemical blonde with bobbed hair and skirt, "what lengwidge!"

"Humph!" grunted the clerk. "How'd you like to be talked to the

way he talks to me? Swearing—and that! But I'll get even with the old beast. You see if I don't!"

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Miss Pattinson. "How fierce you are! I declare you quayte frighten me, Mr. Birkinshaw!"

"Keep your hair on, Birkie," said Cradock. "Percy, you young devil, what have you done with my soap?" Birkie . . .

"What is it?" said the clerk, busy with his papers once more.

"I've got a couple of seats for the Coliseum. I was going to take Cissie—you know, the girl I told you about—but the dirty dog 'phoned me up just now to say she can't come. You care to come along?"



"Mr. Salsbrigg is engaged," said the clerk severely.

"Sorry, old man," mumbled Birkinshaw, his head in his desk, "fraid it's quite impossible!"

"Working late here again, are you?"

There was a slight pause. Cradock repeated his question.

"You staying on, old man?"

"Ye-es. There are those papers for the Patent Office to finish. I—I believe I'll stick on a bit and polish 'em off."

"But you can do 'em to-morrow night just as well. And there's a ripping good bill at the Coliseum."

"Thanks awfully, old man, but I don't think I'll go with you this evening. There's the half-yearly statement coming on, y' know, and I want to get clear for it in good time."

He paused and fell to wiping his glasses. Then shyly:

"It's—it's dam' kind of you to ask me, Crad."

"That's all ri', Birkie. Only it's a pity to waste the other ticket. I'll have to try some of the people at my boarding-house, though they're a dull lot, the Lord knows!"

The door in the glass partition opened again, and Mr. Merritone reappeared. The door closed rather forcibly behind him.

"Whatever have you bin an' done to our Alfred?" remarked the stranger affably to Mr. Birkinshaw. "He is in a sweet temper this evening, I don't think!"

Mr. Birkinshaw glared indignantly at the intruder, who, quite unperturbed, kissed a white-gloved hand gracefully to Miss Pattinson and vanished into the outer office where Percy was stamping the letters for the post.

"He's got a nerve!" said Miss Pattinson, voicing so effectually the general feeling of the clerks' room that neither Birkinshaw nor Cradock felt impelled to add their own comments. The light in Mr. Salsbrigg's office went out abruptly, and a door slammed.

Mr. Cradock, who, in his grass-green overcoat, was practising golf-shots with his walking-stick, looked up.

"Old man's leaving early," he observed. He glanced out of the window. "Hell! It's going to rain. You'll want the Dreadnought going home to-night, old man!"

He jerked his head in the direction of the hat-stand, where Birkinshaw's umbrella, inexhaustible fount of office witticism, stood in its appointed place. It derived its nickname from its crutch handle of solid ash, a regular club of a handle, as thick as two fingers round. Birkinshaw, who had all the Englishman's love of solid belongings, had bought it at a sale. Three days a week, on the average, it accompanied him to the office.

"Nothing like a good umbrella in this filthy climate!" he remarked stolidly, an observation, like the jest, of the sealed pattern variety.

"Umbrella? I should call it a niblick or a baffy myself!" rejoined Cradock, who contrived to play golf on his infinitesimal income. "Well, I must be toddling. Good ni', old man!"

"Good ni', Crad."

Miss Pattinson had already sailed Tubewards on a cloud of patchouli, and after Cradock, presently Percy, three instalments of "Deadwood

Dick," buttoned up beneath his shabby jacket, clattered noisily off to the lift, making the welkin ring with the syncopated protest of the New York fruit-seller. And Birkinshaw was left alone in the office, the green-shaded lamp pulled down low over his desk the only light in the big room.

He sighed and ran his fingers over his thinning sandy hair. It was close on six o'clock, and the voice of the City droned on a deeper note as thousands of tired workers flocked towards their homes in the suburbs. The clerk got out his papers and settled himself down to work. He liked the quiet of the office after the others had gone home. He could concentrate better without Salsbrigg's strident nagging and Cradock's robust breeziness, and Miss Pattinson's indefatigable parade of her feminine arts. In the reposeful, spacious room, with London's lurid night-sky framed in the uncurtained window, he could indulge in those dreams that come even to a city clerk at three-pound-ten a week, more freely than in his cheerless bed-sitting-room in the Fulham Road.

And he could smoke, content in the knowledge that Mr. Salsbrigg's ban against smoking in office hours expired with the termination of the working day at half-past five. From a battered leather cigarette-case he drew one of his famous Bolivian cigarettes, another office joke—unappetising looking smokes of coarse black tobacco, with frayed ends protruding from the thin-grained paper stamped with an eagle in blue. Eager for experiment as he always was, he had picked out a packet in a vague tobacconist's near the office, allured by its proud boast: "Pure as the Pampas Air; Grateful to the Palate; Caressing to the Throat." Though secretly he preferred Gold Flake, he had gallantly stuck to his Bolivians. "An acquired taste, old man," he used to tell Cradock; "a bit pungent at first, but pure; at any rate, a fellow knows what he's smoking!"

As he slipped his cigarette-case back into his pocket, his fingers touched something, and he withdrew a letter sealed and stamped ready for the post. He laid down his cigarette unlit upon the desk and smote his brow. Then, with a hasty glance at the clock, he paused for an instant irresolute, gazing at the papers spread out before him, and presently, with a sudden gesture, began to shovel them together.

Outside in the street the shrill note of a fire-gong rang out suddenly above the dull diapason of the traffic, a fierce, noisy clanging accompanied by the thunder of wheels. Again and again the engines swept by with furious gonging and a headlong rush that made the building tremble. Birkinshaw acted very swiftly. He swept all his papers back into his desk, locked it, changed his office-coat for the jacket of his well-worn suit, grabbed his hat and overcoat, and darted for the door of the outer office, that clicked behind him with a spring-lock. He did not wait for the lift, but descended by the staircase to the ground-floor lobby with its huge shields of the tenants' names. As he reached the swing-doors another fire-engine flashed past. The night porter's box was empty. The sight of passers-by hurrying along the street in the direction taken by the engines told him where the porter had gone.

But Birkinshaw did not bend his steps in the direction of the fire. He hastened to the bloated scarlet pillar-box at the opposite corner of

[Continued on page 6.]



"Good-day to you," said Salsbrigg. . . . "It has been a pleasure to do business with you, Mr. Goldstein."



The Vision of the Snow-Queen.

FROM THE PICTURE BY ALEXANDRE RZEWUSKI.

Although Hans Andersen does not say so, Arctic voyagers must sometimes have seen the Snow-Queen in her strong castle in Spitzbergen, just as little Kay and Gerda saw her, when she grew out of a snow-flake, a maiden of ice, yet alive; clothed in the finest white gauze, her restless eyes flashing like two clear stars.



Bluebeard's Choice : Fatima or Sister Anne?

FROM THE PICTURE BY ALEXANDRE RZEWUSKI.

Both Fatima and Sister Anne were so lovely that Bluebeard was puzzled which to choose. At first neither girl would have him; but he asked them to a great house-party, and gave them such a good time that at length Fatima, to her sorrow, consented.

Finsbury Pavement. There he consulted the plate on the front setting out the times of collection, and finally, without posting his letter, turned away and boarded a 'bus going west. He travelled as far as the General Post Office, where he consigned his envelope to one of the huge maws under the pillared portico, and then, after a moment's hesitation, went out into Newgate Street and smartly hopped on a westward-bound bus.

He took a ticket to Piccadilly, and, alighting at the foot of Bond Street, strolled along towards the Park, a look of happy contentment on



The intruder kissed a white-gloved hand gracefully to Miss Pattinson.

his face, gazing at the brightly illuminated shop-fronts or, as they halted in the press of traffic, peering in at the windows of the glittering limousines bearing elegant, well-fed folk to the restaurants.

At the corner of Dover Street an idea seemed to strike him. He stopped and 'looked' about him, then addressed a passing District Messenger Loy.

"Where's the nearest telegraph-office, sonny?"

"Up Dover Street 'ere on the left," piped the urchin. "But you'll want to be nippy, mate. They closes at seven!"

By the clock above Hatchett's it was five minutes to seven. Birkinshaw hurried up Dover Street and reached the office in time to scribble a telegram under the severe and disapproving gaze of the damsel behind the wire screen, who, dressed for the street, was watching the clock with ill-concealed impatience. As he emerged from the post-office a few drops of rain pattered briskly on his face. He stopped and smote the palm of his hand with his fist. "Well, I'm jiggered!" he said, addressing the night. Then he shrugged his shoulders, and set off slowly towards Piccadilly again.

When, at a quarter of an hour before midnight, he opened with his latch-key the front door of the house where he lodged in the Fulham Road, two dim figures rose up from chairs in the hall to greet him. In the background bobbed the pale and anxious face of his landlady.

"Are you Albert Edward Birkinshaw?" asked one of the two strangers. On the clerk's affirmative reply, the man informed him that he would be arrested for the murder of Alfred Salsbrigg.

II.

Without leaving the box the Coroner's jury returned a verdict of wilful murder against Albert Edward Birkinshaw. The prisoner reserved his defence, but the statement which he made voluntarily to the police, read out in court, did little or nothing to rebut the overwhelming volume of evidence against him.

Detective-Inspector Coleburn of the City Police, who had arrested the prisoner, gave the substance of the case against him. Shortly after seven o'clock on the evening of the murder, Bertram Batts, night porter at Casino House, when engaged in his duties on the third floor of the building, heard the telephone ringing in Mr. Salsbrigg's office. There was a light visible through the glass door, but as no one answered the telephone, thinking that Mr. Salsbrigg had gone away and forgotten to turn off the

light, Batts opened the door of Mr. Salsbrigg's room with his pass-key and found Mr. Salsbrigg dead in his chair.

The officer submitted a plan of the office—a long narrow room, showing that Mr. Salsbrigg's seat at the desk was placed so that it faced the window and had its back to the door. Mr. Salsbrigg lay prone across the desk with arms hanging down, the top of his head practically smashed in by two, or possibly three, blows from some blunt instrument which the medical evidence would show beyond doubt was the crutch-handled umbrella found lying on the floor beside the desk. This umbrella the prisoner admitted to be his.

A murmur ran round the court as the Inspector held up the Dreadnought. The ribs had torn jagged holes in the cover, for the solid ash stick that ran through it from the handle had snapped with the force of those terrible blows, and the whole frame had collapsed. The handle itself was thickly encrusted with matted blood and hair.

"Robbery was evidently the motive of the crime," the Inspector went on, "robbery, and perhaps revenge as well. The pockets of the deceased had been ransacked for his bunch of keys, which was found hanging in the lock of the safe in the wall beside the dead body. In that safe the sum of eighteen hundred pounds in Bank of England notes was deposited on the afternoon of the crime. When the body was found the safe stood open and the money had disappeared.

"I shall call evidence to show that the prisoner was aware that this money was in the safe, that ill-will existed between him and his employer, and that, only a few hours before the murder, he had uttered threats against the deceased. Witnesses will depose that the accused man was alone in the office, all the other employees having gone home, when, about an hour before the crime, Mr. Salsbrigg returned. Finally, still smouldering in the ash-tray on the desk of the deceased, was found one of the prisoner's cigarettes, a brand of Bolivian cigarettes peculiar to him, which, taken with the circumstances that the body was yet quite warm, shows that the crime was committed—and this is supported by the medical evidence—not more than ten minutes before the discovery of the body."

The first witness was Bertram Batts, night porter at Casino House. On the evening of the murder he came on duty at 6 p.m. By that hour most of the offices would be closed. About five minutes past six, Mr. Salsbrigg came in, and Batts took him up in the lift, as the lift-man went off duty at six. He confirmed in more detail the Inspector's account of the finding of the body. In reply to a question by the Coroner he said he heard no sounds of any struggle, as he must have been on the second floor, the floor below, when the crime was actually committed, collecting the rubbish. From the second floor he mounted by the stairs to the third and, hearing the telephone ringing repeatedly in Mr. Salsbrigg's office, went straight there.

"Did you answer the telephone?" asked the Coroner.

"Yes, Sir. It was Mr. Cradock, one of the clerks, asking for Mr. Birkinshaw."

Cross-examined by Mr. Harley Brewster, representing the accused, the witness gave the hour of his finding the body as ten minutes past seven. He had remembered that this might be an important detail, and had looked at the clock in Mr. Salsbrigg's room as he rang up the police. In reply to a further question he stated that after he had taken Mr. Salsbrigg up in the lift, he returned to his box and remained there till 7 p.m., when, as usual, he went to the upper storeys to clear away the litter.

"Then you were not absent from your post for a second after you returned from the lift?"

"No, sir!"

"Then if Birkinshaw left the building between the hours of six and seven you must have seen him?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then we may take it that no one entered or left the building between Mr. Salsbrigg's arrival and seven o'clock?"

"Yes"—defiantly.

"You are prepared to swear to that; you're on your oath, remember!"

The man hesitated, and eventually mumbled something about he "might have popped out to get a mouthful of fresh air."

"You didn't go and see the fire in London Wall by any chance, did you?"

The question took the porter off his guard. Rather abashed he admitted that he did "pop round the corner for a minute or two." With a significant look at the Coroner, Harley Brewster left it at that and sat down.

Followed the medical evidence, very gruesome, with much pawing of the blood-soaked umbrella, and holding up of ghastly exhibits in jars. Then Cradock, pale and reluctant, told how at five minutes past seven he had telephoned the office to try and persuade Birkinshaw to change his mind and accompany him to the theatre; and how, after a long interval, the night-porter had answered the telephone. Under severe questioning by the Coroner he had to admit that Birkinshaw knew that the money was to be locked in the safe for the night, and that the accused had appeared to resent greatly the "ticking-off" he had received from Mr. Salsbrigg.

"Did the prisoner in your hearing threaten the deceased?" the Coroner asked.

"Not exactly threaten. He said he was fed-up, or words to that effect."

"Nothing more than that?"

Cradock flicked a quick, despairing glance at the table where his friend, blinking, bewildered, insignificant, sat between two uniformed constables.

"He said it was more than he could stand, as Salsbrigg would find out."

"What do you suppose he meant by that?" asked Harley Brewster, rising to cross-examine.

"No, no, Mr. Brewster," the Coroner expostulated; and Miss Ruby Pattinson was called. A less unwilling witness was the typist, in deep and fashionable mourning; "a pretty, girlish figure" one of the newspapers called her, with (inset) "Ruby Pattinson Leaving the Court."

She was not hostile to the accused, but she was more concerned with the impression she was producing upon the crowded court than with the exact effect of her deposition. When, after stating that she could not "quayte" recall the exact words used by the prisoner, but he had said he would "do the old devil in," or something like that, for which she had felt impelled to reprove him, she stood down, it was apparent that her evidence had considerably strengthened the case against the prisoner.

"Call Mr. Claud Merritone," ordered the Coroner, and Salsbrigg's affable caller was sworn. His manner was an admirable blend of deference for the court, sorrow for his dead friend, and sympathy with the accused. Mr. Salsbrigg, he was bound to admit, had spoken harshly to the prisoner. He had gone so far as to describe him to the witness as a something fool—he would leave the adjective to the imagination of the court (laughter). He had known Alf Salsbrigg for the matter of a dozen years; he was one of the very best; a thorough good fellow, without an enemy in the world. He had left him about half-past five busy at his desk, and Salsbrigg had said nothing to him then about leaving or returning later to the office. Yes, he had been a witness of the scene between the deceased and the prisoner, and thought, if he might say so with all respect for the dead, that Salsbrigg's tone had been very provoking. Mr. Brewster had no questions to ask, and Mr. Merritone, nursing his oleaginous topper in his white-gloved hands, stood down.

Detective-Inspector Coleburn was recalled by the Coroner to speak as to the cigarette. The Inspector's theory was that the deceased, and not the murderer, had been smoking it, for he had detected particles of the coarse black tobacco of which the cigarette was made upon the dead man's lower lip. A leather case filled with these same cigarettes was found in the possession of the accused, and figured with the other exhibits.

The Coroner then read the prisoner's statement voluntarily made at Cloak Lane Police Station, after he had received the customary warning. According to this he had left the office shortly after six and passed unnoticed out of the building, the night-porter being absent from his box. He had taken a bus to Piccadilly, alighted at the foot of Bond Street, and thereafter walked about the West End. Being a vegetarian, he had dined off some apples and bananas, which he had bought at a stall in the street market off Shaftesbury Avenue. Mr. Salsbrigg had not returned to the office when he left it. He had intended, as he told Cradock, to stay on late and work; but he found he was unsettled and so had changed his plans and gone for a walk up West instead. About ten minutes past eleven he took the Hammersmith Tube from Piccadilly to Baron's Court, and reached his rooms in the Fulham Road shortly before midnight, when he was arrested. He protested he knew nothing whatsoever of the murder.

When the reading of the statement was finished, the prisoner asked if he might be allowed to speak. The Coroner told him he would be better advised to reserve his defence.

"I only wanted to say this," said Mr. Birkinshaw, "and that is I forgot my umbrella when I left the office that evening. As for the cigarette, I remember leaving one out on my desk. I took it from my case intending to light it, and forgot it. I can only suppose that Mr. Salsbrigg found it when he came back and smoked it."

"Is that all?" asked the Coroner bluntly. "Very good." He turned to the jury, "Now, gentlemen. . . ."

"Well," said young Cradock to Harley Brewster as they left the court together. "What do you think?"

"Think?" replied the solicitor disgustedly. "I think that in the whole of my professional career I never saw a man more completely enmeshed in the toils of circumstantial evidence than your pal Birkinshaw. He don't want a lawyer to save his neck; he needs a wonder-worker, by Gad!"

III.

On a soft December morning, with a smooth sea gently lapping the shore below and the bells of St. Peter's calling to church from the cliffs above, Harley Brewster and young Cradock sat on the jetty at Broadstairs and discussed the case.

"Nothing but a good strong alibi will save him," the lawyer announced. "One creditable witness who will depose that at the hour of seven p.m. on that evening your little pal was anywhere but at Casino House will do the trick. But Birkinshaw can produce nothing. He's scarcely able to remember where he wandered during all those hours on the night of the murder. He says nothing but 'It's hopeless! I'm trapped!' Even that fruit he got don't give us an alibi, for, on his own showing, he didn't buy it till nine o'clock or thereabouts, two hours or so after the murder."

"I believe you think he's guilty," said Cradock bitterly.

Brewster shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm sure he's keeping something back. And, as between solicitor and client, that don't go, young man!"

"Look here," said Cradock, "just suppose we're outsiders and know nothing about him. How do the facts strike us? Here's old Birkie, according to the police account, determined to kill Salsbrigg and get away with the boodle. In the first place, we must wash out premeditation, for not only did he kill him with his umbrella, which all of us know, but he goes and leaves it on the scene of the crime. We'll call it a sudden impulse, then. Right! Well, having brained old S., Birkie thinks he'll grab the oof. Now listen to me! Every one of us in the office knows that old Salsbrigg kept his bunch of keys on a steel chain running from the back of his braces to his left-hand trousers pocket. Whoever killed old S. didn't know that, for his pockets were ransacked. The two lower pockets of his waistcoat were turned inside out, and his watch was dangling down from its chain when they found him."

"By George!" commented Brewster, taking his pipe out of his mouth and sitting up. "Go on, young fellow! You're beginning to interest me."

"Another point. Birkie and I both know the key of the safe. Salsbrigg has given it to us scores of times when he's been away. Do you realise that the man who killed Salsbrigg *didn't know which was the key of the safe?*"

"On what did you base that?" said Brewster sternly.



Two dim figures rose up from chairs in the hall to greet him. In the background bobbed the pale and anxious face of his landlady.



"THE TEMPESTUOUS PETTICOAT."

FROM THE WATER COLOUR, "AUX CARESSES DE LA BRISE," BY ANTONIN CALBET. ARTIST'S COPYRIGHT RESERVED.

"The paint, man, the paint! The green paint round the lock shows one scratch, and on the bronze of the lock itself there are other little scratches showing where he must have tried key after key before he hit on the right one."

"Are you sure of this?"

"I spent half an hour last night on the lock with a reading-glass."



"Then," said the solicitor, opening a drawer in the desk, "take a look at this!"

"Go on!" said Brewster grimly.

"You've seen the mess that old Birkie's gamp is in. Isn't it rather strange that there was no blood on Birkie's clothes? I don't know anything about these things, but I've always heard that blood is rather hard to wash off. And where can a man, wandering about London at night, wash his clothes clean?"

"He might have gone to a friend's house," the lawyer put in.

"I'll grant you that, though I don't believe Birkie has a single friend in London apart from me. But there's this further point. You made that lying porter admit that he did not see Birkie go out, didn't you?"

"By implication, yes."

"Then"—triumphantly—"if he didn't see Birkie go out, why shouldn't the murderer have come in and out again unobserved? How about that, old man—how about that?"

"I had some idea of this in my mind when I cross-examined Batts at the inquest. But now, my young Sherlock Holmes, we come to the question—if your little friend didn't kill Salsbrigg, who did?"

"I'll tell you. Someone who knew that old S. was staying late at the office, someone who knew that eighteen hundred pounds was in the safe! We all knew the money was there, but none of us had any idea that the old man was coming back after hours. It very seldom happens."

"That's all very well. But who did know, then, that Salsbrigg had come back and that this money was in the safe?"

Cradock looked the other in the eyes.

"Merritone," he said.

"Merritone? The chap that gave evidence at the inquest?"

"That's him. Now, listen! Old Salsbrigg was a pretty warm proposition; he had some dam' funny friends calling round to see him at the office. That is why he was so particular about never seeing people except by appointment. On the afternoon of the murder this fellow rolls up. Well, you've seen him: you know what he looks like. He butted in without any appointment and was in the clerks' room when the old man was telling off Birkie for giving Goldstein, the man that brought the eighteen hundred pounds, an appointment after banking hours. As soon as Salsbrigg was finished with Birkie, this Merritone chap, cool as a cucumber, walks into the old man's private office, and Salsbrigg, who had a pretty rough tongue when he liked, never said a word. They weren't long together, and the door slammed pretty fiercely when Merritone came out. Do you know what I think? I believe Merritone had some sort of a hold over the old man, and had come round to raise the wind. Salsbrigg looked at him pretty old-fashioned when Merritone first came into the office."

Brewster puffed meditatively at his pipe.

"Blackmail, eh?"

"Something like that."

"But what do you know to prove that Merritone knew that Salsbrigg was coming back?"

"Nothing positive. But as Merritone was leaving the office, the light in the old man's room went out, and we heard his private door leading into the corridor slam. That means they must have quitted the building practically at the same time. I can guess where the old man went—to the Bodega. He generally went out and had a couple if anything upset him. Merritone might have shadowed him. If he had only meant to rob the safe, he would have wanted to see old Salsbrigg out of the way first."

Brewster nodded grimly. Then he stood up and tapped the ashes out of his pipe.

"If you will apply your gifts of deduction for the next ten minutes to divining what the wild waves are saying," he remarked, "I will step

up to the telegraph-office and send a wire. We will then go up to the North Foreland and see if the air on the links will blow some of the cobwebs out of our minds."

IV.

Three days later, Detective-Inspector Coleburn sat opposite Mr. Harley Brewster in the latter's office in Southampton Street.

"I hold no brief for Merritone, Mr. Brewster," the detective was saying; "but because a man's a crook, it doesn't follow he's a murderer. And to be perfectly frank with you, it'll take a great deal more than Merritone's record—he's done an aggregate of fifteen years' penal servitude and shorter sentences, they tell me at the Yard—to shake the evidence against Birkinshaw. I grant you Merritone probably came to squeeze Salsbrigg for a bit; they were old friends, you know—in fact, Merritone was jugged for the first time over one of Salsbrigg's swindles; but, dearie me, there's not a particle of evidence to connect him with this murder."

"Not yet," said Brewster bluntly, "but I believe there will be, Inspector, if we get word quickly of any of the notes being cashed. As you got the numbers from Goldstein we should hear at once. We know that Merritone is broke to the wide, that he skipped from his boarding-house in Kilburn without paying the bill. I do sincerely hope that you're hot after him."

"As hot as we should be after any other old lag who falls back upon his old tricks, Mr. Brewster. But I fear very much you're drawing a red herring across the trail, sir."

"Then," said the solicitor, opening a drawer in the desk, "take a look at this!"



"Mean?" roared Brewster, grabbing his hat. . . . "Look at the time of despatch on this telegram."

And he flung on the blotter a stained and crumpled doeskin glove. Once it had been white, but now it was grimy and sodden as though it had been left out in the rain for days. Palm and fingers were tinged a dull terra-cotta.

"Blood," said Brewster, and pointed at the stain. "They brought me that this morning, Inspector. It was picked up in the air shaft between Casino House and the building backing on to it, overlooked by the window on the landing outside Salsbrigg's office. Perhaps you remarked the gloves that Mr. Claud Merritone was wearing at the inquest. A gentleman of settled habits, it would seem."

"I'll take charge of this," said the Inspector hoarsely.

"By all means," Brewster acquiesced smilingly. "That's why I asked you to call upon me this morning. Come in!"

His clerk entered with a card, which he laid silently before the lawyer. Brewster's hand went up and eased his collar. He turned and exchanged a silent glance with his clerk.

"I'll leave you, Mr. Brewster," said the detective, rising and buttoning up his overcoat. "Good-day to you, sir."

The moment he had gone the solicitor turned to his clerk.

"Show the lady in, Simmons," he said.

It was a woman very simply dressed in black, pale of face, and prematurely grey.

"Mrs. Salsbrigg?" said Brewster, looking at the card. "Won't you sit down? You wished to speak to me about my client, Mr. Birkinshaw?"

His voice was rather stern. She noticed it, for she said hastily:

"To help him, Mr. Brewster. He will need money for his defence. I was in Sicily, at Palermo, when I heard the news. My husband and I have lived apart for many years, and I don't see the English newspapers regularly. It was only four days ago that I heard of the terrible disaster that has overtaken my old friend. I was at my wits' end to know what to do, for I had no address to which to write, so I came myself to say that any money that is required for his defence is at your disposal."

"That question has no urgency," said the solicitor rather severely.

"That was not the sole object of my visit," the woman rejoined. "Before you hear my story, Mr. Brewster, let me say that, in spite of all appearances, I am convinced that Mr. Birkinshaw is incapable of this terrible crime. Five years ago I had to leave my husband. I invested my savings in a small hat-shop in Manchester. It did not prosper; I borrowed money; my forewoman robbed me; and finally I was left absolutely penniless with two children to support. To avoid my creditors I fled in a moment of panic to France. Thence I wrote to Albert Birkinshaw, whom I had known in happier days, for I would not appeal to my husband, God rest his soul!"

"Albert Birkinshaw was a true friend. Not only did he send me money to tide over the crisis, but he undertook the whole settlement of my affairs and began himself to pay off the money due under the arrangement he had made. Only this year, since the boarding-house I started at Palermo began to do well, has he consented to let me start repayment of the three hundred pounds or more I owe him. The tragedy of it is that he paid the last instalment of the debt on the very day of the murder through which I inherit the money due to me under my marriage settlement."

Brewster looked up quickly.

"You say that Mr. Birkinshaw made this last payment on the day of the murder?" he said. "You realise, I suppose, that this makes things look blacker than ever for him. You see, a sum of eighteen hundred pounds is missing. It will be said that part of this sum went to make this payment."

She nodded with tense face.

"That is not all," she said, and lowered her voice. "May I speak freely, Mr. Brewster?"

"Nothing you say will pass these four walls, Mrs. Salsbrigg, without your consent," he assured her.

She opened her bag and drew out a folded paper.

"Have they found out about this telegram that Mr. Birkinshaw sent me on the evening of the murder?" she asked.

Brewster's eyebrows went up. "May I see it?" he asked, trying to appear calm.

She hesitated. "We must keep it from the police at all costs," she faltered. "It would be fatal if it came out."

Brewster unfolded the telegram and read—

"Final payment made to-night. You are free.—Birkinshaw."

The solicitor whistled and cast his eyes up. Then, with a harassed air, he clawed the back of his head.

"This is the de-vil!" he remarked. "Sent off on the evening of the murder, you said? Let's see now—'de Londres 8'—that's the date, Dec. 8—'18.58.S.'—that's the time. Eighteen hours by Continental reckoning is 6 p.m.—that's 6.58 p.m. . . ."

He broke off, with eyes goggling.

"Simmons!" he shouted. "Simmons!"

The amazed clerk appeared.

"A taxi quick! I'm going to Brixton Prison!"

The clerk vanished.

"But what does it all mean?" cried Mrs. Salsbrigg.

"Mean?" roared Brewster, grabbing his hat. "Good God, Madam, don't you understand? Look at the time of despatch on this telegram—6.58! Your husband was murdered at seven o'clock, or perhaps a few minutes sooner or later. If Birkinshaw can prove that he handed this message in personally at any telegraph-office that is more than, say, five minutes' distance from Casino House, he has established an unshakable

alibi. Why the devil they don't put the office of despatch on foreign telegrams beats me!"

"Taxi, Sir!" panted Simmons at the door.

By three o'clock that afternoon the good creditable witness for which Mr. Harley Brewster's soul had hungered had been found. On Birkinshaw's indications, the solicitor tracked down the damsel whose severe regard had so flustered the clerk as he had scribbled out his telegram within two minutes of the closing hour of the Dover Street post-office. To Brewster's enraptured gaze she appeared like a being from another sphere as, when the original yellow form was laid before her, with becoming hauteur she immediately described the "little fellow with pince-nez and a sandy moustache" who had handed it in. And so, on the very day on which Detective-Inspector Coleburn left for Ostend to take charge of a smartly dressed Englishman, tall and dark and sallow, detained by the Belgian police for attempting to change one of the hundred-

pound notes stolen from Mr. Salsbrigg's safe, Albert Birkinshaw found himself a free man.

Harley Brewster entertained his client, Mrs. Salsbrigg, and Cradock at lunch to celebrate the occasion.

"What beats me, Birkinshaw," the solicitor remarked, "is why you should have withheld from your solicitor the one vital piece of information that would have secured your immediate release."

"Eh, what?" said the little man, who had been gazing intently at the lady. Brewster repeated his question. Birkinshaw coloured up.

"I was afraid they'd bring Em'ly—I mean, Mrs. Salsbrigg—into it," he replied dreamily. "The wording of that wire was a bit compromising, y'know. They'd have said Em'ly—Mrs. Salsbrigg—and I had arranged to get rid of Mr. Salsbrigg."

"But, dash it all, the time, man—the time! It was a perfect alibi!"

One of Mr. Birkinshaw's hands disappeared beneath the table-cloth. An expression of seraphic contentment dawned on his face.

"I'm afraid I never thought of that."

"A bit dull, your friend," whispered Brewster behind the menu to Cradock. "Half-asleep he seems to me sometimes."

Cradock grinned.

"That's what old Salsbrigg told him," he rejoined. "But we mustn't say things like that about him now. He's to be the new boss, y'know, old man!"

He nodded significantly and drew Mr. Brewster's attention to his two guests facing him across the table. They were holding hands beneath the cloth.

"Em'ly!" sighed Mr. Birkinshaw.

"Dear Albert!" crooned Mrs. Salsbrigg.



They were holding hands beneath the cloth.

Finis



Peggy Wideaway's Conversion

By ERNEST RAYMOND, Author of "Tell England," "Rossenal," and "Damascus Gate."

ILLUSTRATED BY ERNEST H. SHEPARD.

I.

PEGGY WIDEAWAY was seven years old when she was converted. That isn't to say that she had been a pagan all the time before. Obviously not, for she had been properly christened, and she had believed without question all that her mother told her about Heaven and all that her nurse told her about Hell. And she had believed quite a lot that her brother Derek told her about Satan, for Derek, being a year older, spoke with some authority. Clearly, then, she was a Christian, but it had been a Christianity of the mind rather than of the heart. She would have had no sympathy with intellectual doubts as to the ability of God to suspend Himself, in defiance of the laws of gravity, above the clouds and the sky. Was He not able to do anything He wanted, even to making a door open and shut at the same time? You may say, then, that she had faith. But it was faith without works. Or, if there had been works, they were based on fear rather than love, Peggy's faith being like that of the devils—she believed, and trembled. They were superstitious works.

In the bedtime concerts, for example, she preserved a careful divorce between the secular and the sacred, having more than a suspicion that the secular, since it was so enjoyable, was heavily tainted with wrong. These concerts were held at half-past six on summer evenings. She and brother Derek had then been put to bed in the big nursery in two beds side by side; and as it was very difficult to go to sleep at that early hour, daylight being still on the other side of the blinds and a clattering of dinner-plates down below, they passed the time with music. The items would be either instrumental or vocal, provided always that Derek conducted them. If they were instrumental, they were produced

by the issuing of a buzzing hum through Peggy's teeth and of the word "twang-twang" through Derek's nose. But, whether they were instrumental or vocal, a sharp distinction, so Peggy insisted, had to be maintained between the rendering of comic songs and that of hymns. They should always count twenty before passing from such a comic song as "I bet my money on a bob-tailed nag—Doo-dah, doo-dah, day" to "I love to hear the story which Angel voices tell." If the comic song were excessively comic, she increased the twenty to fifty. If it were undeniably wicked, she demanded a hundred.

Another remarkable notion at which Peggy had arrived was that bedside prayers, since they were sacred things, ought to be uncomfortable, with the corollary that they increased in virtue as they increased in discomfort; and that, therefore, if she knelt on coldish nights stark naked at her bed they were more than usually acceptable to God.

Then, again, if she or Derek told tales about fairies, or about people who didn't exist, it was necessary to preserve them from being lies in the sight of Heaven by prefixing the word "Pretend" to these fictitious characters when first you mentioned them. That done, all was well. She could tell a lot about her Pretend Fairies who inhabited the corner cupboard. And, after styling them "Pretend Fairies" once, the convention permitted her to refer to them henceforth as her "P. Fairies," or even to drop a prefix altogether.

And yet there was nothing behind this reverence, mark you—no love, no settled state of grace. There couldn't have been, for, if she was thrown out of temper, she had one sure and favoured way of venting her spleen; and it was to say to herself again and again: "I hate God. I hate God.



When the tide was out you footed it along the rocks.

I hate God." Of course, it was her unquestioning belief in God and His destructive power that made this risky expletive so satisfying.

II.

It was Derek's Pretend Cousins who worked Peggy's conversion. These interesting people appeared when she and Derek and Mrs. and Mr. Wideaway and Nurse and Lilian (a maid) were spending the summer holiday in the Isle of Wight. Do you know in that island a bight called Freshwater Bay, with caves like a cathedral on its western side, and for its eastern arm a stretch of cliff, and then an arched rock, and then the Stag Rock, so styled because of the hunted stag who leapt for safety from the golf-links to the grassy tuft on its summit? It was at Freshwater (in a little rented house, with fruit-trees behind and a potato-field at its side) that all the Wideaways were staying. And Derek's cousins, it seemed, were staying there too. Only they didn't live in a rented house or in apartments. They lived in the Frenchman's Hole in the Western Caves. Derek had taken Peggy and shown her the place. When the tide was out you footed it along the rocks, walking delicately, for they were both sharp with jagged ends and slippery with seaweed. It was best to have your legs bared for sudden immersion, but rubber shoes on your feet. You entered the first and smaller cave. But that was only the Ante-Room. At least, it was the Ante-Room when the Great Cave was a theatre, and it was the Vestry when the Great Cave was a Cathedral. You got to the Great Cave from the Ante-Room by the Emergency Exit, a sea-worn passage or tunnel, little more than a crack; and you bent your head low and went through it hurriedly, lest this were the very moment (which must one day come) when it fell in and either crushed you to powder or enclosed you alive for ever. From it you emerged into the Cathedral, with its apsidal end and its Gothic roof, so high where the great arch spanned the sea, and so low where the vaulting met the shelved beach. Once in the Great Cave, the first thing you looked at was the Frenchman's Hole. It was a natural stairway leading up into the dark interior of the living rock. The Frenchman had hidden there from someone, and escaped to somewhere. Derek had one morning decided to climb up and examine it. But he had only, while Peggy watched, taken two steps into the hole's dark heart, and then come down again. It was getting late, he explained. And they mustn't risk being cut off by the tide.

It was there that the Pretend Cousins lived. Not that they never came out. Presumably they took excursions all over the island. For, whenever Derek wanted to go off alone, towards Totland or Sheepwash or Compton Farm, he was always, so he told Peggy, going to meet his cousins. And great adventures he enjoyed with them, as he related to her at bedtime. So far as she could make out, there were three of them—two boys and a girl. But their number varied strangely, and their ages and heights too. It was this atmosphere of the unknown and of variability, together with certain dark, psychic powers that they possessed, that made them grow rather uncanny to Peggy, rather terrifying. She at once longed and dreaded to hear stories of them.

The weather was hot that August. Mother sighed a lot and fanned herself; Nurse called it "overpowering"; Lilian, the maid, declared that it would have to break sooner or later; and Father said it was the Devil. Weeks had passed without rain; the grass was burned yellow; the country roads seemed to bake one's bare legs, and the water in the rocks to dazzle one's eyes. And the nights were too sultry for sleep. That was the worst of it. For Peggy didn't like remaining awake in the darkness with the window open—after Derek was asleep. Sometimes Derek had a way of not being asleep when he appeared to be, so that, if he suddenly spoke to her, after she had turned round in her bed, it gave her a nasty turn. "Are you awake, Peggy?" he asked one night. "Yes," she answered, as her heart decelerated. "I say," continued Derek, rather mysteriously. And Peggy could see his eyes looking into hers. "Would you like to meet my cousins?" "Ye-es," answered Peggy, feeling that she was socially obliged to answer thus.

"Well, I was talking to them this afternoon. And they told me how it could be done. They know you well, of course. They've often been watching you, when you didn't know they were there. They were invisible, of course. P'raps they're in the room watching us now, being able to see in the dark."

Peggy set her teeth.

"They told me there's only one way of your being able to see them. I, of course, can see them at any time. And that is to stay in the cave, after the tide's up, and wait there till it's down again. They only appear

to those who stay there for a whole tide. I'd do it. I'm not afraid are you?"

"No—not if you're sure the tide doesn't come right up into the whole of the cave."

"Of course it doesn't," said Derek impatiently. "You can see on the rock the high-water mark, and you can see that some of the beach is hardly ever wet. . . . And even if it did come up the whole way, there's always the Frenchman's Hole. Let's do it. Or would you be afraid?"

Peggy wondered how she could pretend not to be afraid without lying.

"I shouldn't be afraid of staying in the cave—with you—if the water didn't come up the whole way."

And that was exactly true. Peggy wasn't afraid of water, or of tangible things, but she was dreadfully afraid of some awful materialisation of Derek's cousins. Out of the dark Frenchman's Hole they would come. And she knew that when these fears got hold of her, the correcting principle in her brain, which ought to keep reminding her that it was only a game, would fail to work. That was the terror. Derek's worked; hers didn't. To her it was real.

"Well, when shall we do it?" demanded Derek.

"I don't know."

"Guess."

Peggy failed to guess, having an idea that, if she named a day, she would increase the chances of it all happening.

"Why, there's only one day possible. The day after to-morrow, Thursday, when father and mother are going to London for the day."

"They're only going if it's fine," said Peggy, in a burst of hope that it would be wet.

"Oh, it'll be fine all right. My cousins told me so. They know.

Besides, they can arrange for it to be fine. They're very powerful."

"Are they as powerful as God?" asked Peggy pointedly.

Peggy was no longer conscious that a question like this, which mixed up the actual with the chimerical, was hardly playing the game. But Derek saw the flaw at once, and replied:

"Silly! He isn't in games."

This tremendous remark momentarily pierced Peggy's fog with a shaft of light: it separated make-believe from reality, and God was seen to be as clearly real as the terrible cousins were make-believe. But it also separated the secular from the sacred, and the make-up games were seen to be clearly secular, and probably tinged with wrong, which would account for something slightly diabolical about their fascination. The illumination was rather heart-stopping, for she saw that God was completely out of it. It would be futile on every score to ask Him to come to her assistance in the matter of a game. More, it would be profanity, and, as such, would probably provoke Him

to send as punishment the very opposite of what she asked. And He was too clever not to see through it, if she purposely asked the opposite of what she wanted. Manifestly, then, she mustn't ask Him to make it rain on Thursday.

There was moisture on Peggy's brow, as she lay in bed. She would have to go quite alone into this awful game of Derek's. God was out of it, and, in a sense, not even Derek would accompany her. For Derek would be able to remember that it was all a game, but to her it would be real.

III.

All the next day Derek talked much of his plan. If father and mother were gone, they could give nurse the slip by pretending to play on the beach. And she wouldn't tell anything, or she'd get herself into a row. What fun it would be, sitting alone in the cave, and holding mysterious communion with Derek's ghostly relatives!

The weather was as settled as ever, the sky hard and brilliant; and all preparations were made for the visit of father and mother to London. And Derek did a lot of asking: "What did I tell you? Didn't I say they'd arrange for it to be fine?"

And Peggy, beginning by being afraid of something in the cave, was now so obsessed by her fear that she had almost forgotten what it was about. But nothing existed save in its relation to that dark, incomprehensible fear. The hours that marked off time were only important in so far as they meant that she was getting nearer and nearer to the awful moment. London was only thought of as a place that might be conveniently (only it was too good a hope to come to pass) burnt down between now and Thursday morning, and so keep her parents in Freshwater. Or another Great Plague might break out and spread over it. All of which thoughts showed how frightfully wicked she was, and how worse than useless it would be to call in God to her assistance.



"Oh, God, make it rain!"

Wednesday was like the last day on earth of a condemned criminal. All day, as she kept up an appearance of playing on the beach—for her mental fear was of that sort which she must never tell to her fellows—she was really envying the other children who had no reason to dread the coming of to-morrow. She wondered what they would say if they learned what she was suffering. Once or twice she got relief by thinking that something big would happen to prevent the visit to the cave. She employed a favourite test: Derek's conversation having lapsed, she said to herself, "If he speaks again before I count twenty, nothing 'll happen." And by counting twenty very fast she succeeded in getting through before Derek was again inspired to speech. But once he caused her a rather sickening disappointment by suddenly saying something at the number sixteen.

With the fall of Wednesday evening and the gathering of the darkness, Peggy's terror became intolerable. No matter if it were futile; no matter if it were sinful; no matter if it should bring on her the punishment of the frivolous and the profane, she *would*—she *must* ask God to make an exception in the case of this particular game and do something to prevent the carrying out of Derek's plan. "Oh, God, make it rain—make it rain!" she prayed at her bedside; and she apologised for all the past, and knelt long on the hard floor so as to make her knees hurt and thus add a value to her prayers. And, lest God were not prepared to make it rain, she prayed that she might sprain her ankle or be taken seriously ill.

hastened to tell. "They're turning their backs to the way the weather's coming from. They're 'specting it, you see."

Crash came another thunderclap. And lightning again. Peggy didn't mind. She loved it. She had no fear of concrete thunderstorms, but only of fantastic chimeras. Crash again. Then a curious sound of rushing, of something tearing through the trees of the garden and beating on the ground—a sound of many waters in the gulleys. Rain. Sheets of it.

"My!" exclaimed Derek. "It's raining cats and dogs."

There were voices on the landing outside. Nurse and the maid were coming to shut the wide-open window in the hall.

"I knew it'd break sooner or later," said the maid.

"Yes, I've felt it all the evening," replied nurse. "I'd such a headache I said: 'I'm sure a thunderstorm's coming up.'"

There was another crash of thunder, the noise of its reverberation slightly diminished as Derek slammed down the window.

"Pho-o-o-o!" he whistled.

V

It would have been useless to talk to Peggy about the inevitability of the weather-break. She knew that the secret of that noisy downpour was in the possession of two people only—herself as she lay in bed and Him who wielded the storm. She lay exhilarated. It was the experience your grown-up people call conversion. There was that all-of-a-sudden new



"Peggy, are you awake?" It was Derek's voice. "Look at the lightning! Isn't it splendid?"

Rising from her knees, she felt a little better. But it was only the despairing calm that comes from having taken a final step. She had not much hope. Probably God would do nothing, unless He punished her. The night was as fine and hot as ever. Phew! It was overpowering! She would try if she could sleep without any covering. Ah, that was better. . . .

IV.

She woke with a horrible start, to hear a voice addressing her in the darkness.

"Peggy! Peggy!" it said.

Her heart leapt, and at the same moment a frightful noise like an explosion was heard outside. It ran echoing away. A brilliant light lit up all the room; she saw the wash-hand-stand, and the coloured "photograph" of a fishmonger's boy reading *Tit-Bits* while the cat ran off with his fish, and a similar photograph of the Good Shepherd. Dogs barked over the countryside, some near and some far away. A very late, or very early, market cart clattered down the distance as if it were escaping from a terror.

"Peggy, are you awake?" It was Derek's voice. "Look at the lightning! Isn't it splendid?"

He jumped out of bed and ran to the open window. A flash illuminated the scene for him.

"My, Peggy! The cows are all huddled together under the trees. And they and the old horse are all looking the same way. Do you know why that is?" And, in case she knew and got her answer in first, he

view of God. There was the revelation of His intense personal interest in her, Peggy; of His readiness to treat past offences (and wicked blasphemies, mind you) as if they had never been. She saw now how un-moral she had been, and that henceforth she would have a duty to God; and that this duty, if it were not yet based in love, was at least based on gratitude and friendliness. She thought of St. Paul and the dazzling light from Heaven.

VI.

That is the true story of the first conversion of Peggy, or Sister Margaret, as they call her to-day. I grant you that several more were necessary later on. But, inasmuch as whatever happens before eight years old—so the wise men say, and they are right—leaves a bias that only miracles will remove, this was the most important one. She never really recovered from it. So she told me, when I met her a year ago. I had been driving in a buggy through the squalid and odorous bazaars of Bombay, to visit a settlement of Sisters, supported by a famous London church, for work among the Eurasian Christians. Sister Margaret was there. She might have been thirty, but she had the serene and ageless and laughing-eyed face of a humour-loving saint. And when, in my sceptical way, I asked her what would have happened to her faith had the rain not continued all the next day, she retorted with a gay smile: "But it *did* continue, you see"; and when, thus completely repulsed, I demanded whether, after all, the synchronisation of the weather-break with her prayers was not a coincidence, she rippled with laughter and replied, "Does it matter?" And I returned to Bombay.—[THE END.]

THE LOOKER-ON AND THE GAME

BY F. TENNYSON JESSE



Illustrated by A. FORESTIER.

Author of "The Milky Way," "Beggars on Horseback," etc.

HERE is occasionally to be found in the world a certain very rare type of person apt, for all the rarity of it, to pass unnoticed, because lack of obviousness is of its essence—the type of the true looker-on. For though mankind is, roughly, divisible into two classes—those who act and those who watch—the true looker-on is no mere unwilling denizen of the latter. Those who watch are mostly vain wishers after the ardours and dust of the arena, and the unkind compulsion of their physical aspect or a strange, grey timidity of soul constrains them from full participation. But the Compleat Looker-On is bound by no arbitrary power from without; his equipment is adequate should he wish to use it—it is his own choice—some queer passion for freedom in himself that makes for him the keenest joy reside in watching the pattern of life as it flows past his eager, smiling, pitiful eyes. No man is free whose heart-beats are quickened by the step of another. The watcher who is grudging, envious, debarred in spite of himself from joining in that sweet but urgent flood, is a negation; but the deliberate onlooker is positive; and deliberate onlooking needs a special temperament as much as does any other profession worth the following. It needs a love of mankind and love of no man, joy in life and no dread of death, a knife-keen brilliance of perception, and an iron control of emotion. The particular temptation of the onlooking temperament is the same that assails all those who, like politicians, doctors, or parsons, deal with humanity from a standpoint which does not involve personal reaction upon themselves—the temptation to pull strings. And yet, even in this, which is undoubtedly one of the most dangerous of weaknesses, the god-like nature of the occupation stands revealed. Who is there with imagination, however much for himself he may want the personal emotions, but must see the glamour of this looking on at life? Not patronisingly, not standing aloof as one who scorns the plunge, but as one who revels too deeply in the richness of all he sees to dare to narrow it down to the violence of what he himself might feel?

Of this rare company was an apparently insignificant little spinster of the uncoloured name of Emily Smith, who, like so many of her outward seeming, lived chiefly in boarding-houses. She, like the many unattached women, of whom the widows seem only more acutely unmarried than the virgins, sat in corners of dull rooms and knitted or wrote letters, though they all seem too unrelated to life for ties vital enough to necessitate communication with any other human being.

Oh, those women! . . . what woman has not seen them, shuddered at them in the insolence of youth, feared them in the approach of early middle-life, become merged in them or triumphantly forgotten their existence in an old age either drifting or achieved, according to circumstance?

Emily's life, in the midst of them, was a thing colourful, warm; their every little idiosyncrasy vivid to her because they were part of this pattern she so loved. She was veritably a spinster—one who spins—for she span fancies about all she met which were at least potentially true,

for her acute perception gave her the facts from which her fancies were the projections—extravagant sometimes, but always possible had circumstances been otherwise. There are people born to be the Greek chorus in the play of life, to be the Confidential Friends, the Go-Betweens, but that is not the same thing as being a mere "super." A looker-on is not a walker-on.

Emily, with her grey eyes that were all of beauty remaining in her worn delicate face, her vigorous charm, her aloof sweetness, was not a woman who had been thrust out of the main stream because she was a useless encumbrance. She stayed on the bank because she loved the flow of the waters too much to yield her joy in seeing it, and because she would not give to the urgency of a tide that sense of direction which she preferred to keep inviolable: a passion for freedom more rarely found in women than in men, because women have to give up so much more to retain it.

It is easier for the normal male to indulge in personal contacts without losing his soul than it is for the normal woman, so much more deeply affected by the tug of nature.

Emily Smith was better proof against the string-pulling temptation than most lookers-on, chiefly because in her this passion for freedom was so deeply rooted that she resented any attempt at meddling with the lives of others, for them as she would have for herself. Yet there was one occasion when, as she was forced to admit herself, she succumbed to the fun of playing with the greatest of all toys.

She was staying in a convent in the Alpes Maritimes, and was drawn into the affair in the first place by no fault of her own.

One day—a day of clear cold blue sky and a young soft wind that blew the shadows from the leaves without over and over the whitewashed walls of her room like a flight of little grey birds—the lay-sister knocked at her door with the message that the Reverend Mother would be glad to speak to her in the parlour. Emily descended, and in the frigid little room, where the glossy green-tiled stove gave out nothing more warming than a pleasant smell of smouldering fir-cones, the Reverend Mother awaited her.

"It is that I want your advice, Mees *chérie*," she began. "We are, as you know, going to give a performance of our pupils in the big school-room of the Lycée for the feast of Christmas, and we have several little plays for the children to act. But Marie—Marie, who was to take the leading part in a little trifle called 'L'Anglaise en Voyage'—has fallen ill from an influenza, and so I wonder whether you, who are of so good heart, would not act instead. It is of a simplicity it would not take much of your time; is it not so?"

"Many thanks, *ma mère*," said Emily, in mock indignation, "but I have been at a rehearsal of 'L'Anglaise en Voyage,' and I consider it a base libel. It's all about a frightful and dowdy Englishwoman who arrives at a French inn in the middle of the night, and insists on having 'rosbif' and 'plompooding' procured for her. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll write you a play called 'La Française en Voyage,' which shall be about a Frenchwoman arriving at an inn in England and demanding frogs' legs



"Ah, you will write us a play!" she crowed.

and snails. It would be just as sensible!" Unfortunately the dear soul took her seriously.

"Ah, you will write us a play!" she crowed. "But that's better still! Something charming will it not be, and nice for the children? I said to Sœur Isabelle, 'Mees, she will not disappoint us!'"

There was no getting out of it. In vain, and untruthfully, Emily protested that she couldn't write, never had written, and didn't feel capable of beginning at her age.

The Mère Gonzage only beamed at her. "Mees," she said, "you say you have not this talent of writing. You have a gift that values far more."

"What's that, *ma mère*?" said Emily.

"Of making people love you," she said, only much more prettily, in French. Emily was far enough advanced along the path of self-ignoring to feel only a faint twinge of pleasure that she laughed at even as she felt it.

"Whatever you do," the Reverend Mother went on, "I know it will be like yourself, and so we shall like it." This with an air of triumphant logic. There was no more to be said, and Emily fled out of doors and set out for the mountain side, where she was wont to lie with a book, or merely her own thoughts, on a fine afternoon.

To-day, she went farther than usual in her vain search for inspiration, and the dusk caught her; the mountains, that for one quarter-hour of magic had turned to a rosy copper with amethyst shadows, suddenly fell into a cold grey-blue, and the air was chill as water around her.



She caught her foot in a tangle of roots and fell, twisting her ankle badly.

There was to be no moon that night, so it behoved her to hasten, which was why she attempted a short cut across the flank of a mountain. Soon she regretted it, for she lost her way hopelessly, and went stumbling on in the darkness over myrtle bushes and loose stones, knocking up against thin little trees—oaks, not olives, for she was still far above the cultivated terraces. Then she caught her foot in a tangle of roots and fell, twisting her ankle badly. She said "Damn!" as pain flashed across her instep; then sat up in the dark and rubbed it. What she would have done next, had it not been that she suddenly caught sight of a light glimmering ahead, cannot be known. As it was, she got to her feet and surmise became certainty as she saw before her a tiny cottage. It was so small that it looked like the enchanted hut of gingerbread that Hansel and Gretel found in the wood, and from its one window, the size of a pocket-handkerchief, the light gleamed out. She hopped forward, knocked on the door, and pushed it open.

The hut was only about seven feet square, with an enormous open hearth and yawning chimney at one side of it; a fire of logs was filling the place with a good smell, but much pricking smoke; through it Emily caught sight of the hut's owner.

He was a very tall man—so tall he could only just stand upright in his toy house—and the face he turned to her looked more like the face of a lost dog than anything else she could think of. His shaggy dark hair fell round it and mingled with his thin, pointed beard; his eyes, dark, keen, and extraordinarily sad, shone out



"Oh—let me!" Emily cried, holding out her arms. "Whose is he?"

from a network of heavy lines, and his blunt nose seemed to twitch at her like that of an enquiring dog. He was dressed in a sheepskin and had strips of hide wound about his legs and bound with cross-garterings, like some rude Malvolio. Behind his head a wild-cat skin, roughly cured and nailed against the plaster wall, showed dimly black and white. In the shadow, farthest from the fire, was a large dark object like a chest, with some drapery trailing over it, so that Emily could not see its contents.

Whatever, or whoever, he was—and it transpired that his name was Auguste Maurel and that he was a shepherd—he was certainly a gentleman in the more vital meaning of the word. No one could have dispensed the hospitality of a château with more true courtesy. He ensconced her in the best chair, made some water hot for her to bathe her ankle, and then brought forth a bottle of the harsh cider of the country, which he poured into tumblers that he first wiped out with his handkerchief—a proceeding at which she flinched inwardly, yet she could not let him outdo her in courtesy, so drank without betraying a tremor. He talked little, and in a queer, difficult way, as though for him speech had grown rusty with disuse, but he listened with vivid interest to Emily's recital of her misfortune. Nevertheless, she was aware of a certain strangeness in him, an unrest that seemed to grow as he sat before her sipping his cider; yet this strangeness was too evasive for her to define it, and she began to grow drowsy with heat and wood smoke, and wonder vaguely how she was going to get herself back to her nunnery, when the host suddenly broke the silence into which they had fallen.

"*Mon Dieu!*" said he, "I must talk. . . . I can't help it, Madame.

It's two years now I've been a hermit up here and never been down to town. It seems like ten. No one has come near me, because when they tried it I pointed my big gun at them. But now you have come and I feel something is broken! I must talk. I must know things. Tell me, is the town much changed?"

She explained she was new to the place, and then he cross-examined her. Who was Mayor now—still the fat old baker? And the nuns?—"They haven't turned them out, then? They still teach?" he asked.

"Yes, they still have a school; they are going to have a *fête* for the children soon, at Christmas time."

He turned his head and gave a glance at the dark object in the corner, and as he did so, as though provoked by some sentence of his look, a tiny whimpering cry came from it. He was beside it in a moment, and, pulling off the wrappings, he lifted out a blinking, dark-eyed, shock-headed baby about two years old.

"Oh—let me!" Emily cried, holding out her arms. "Whose is he?"

"Mine," replied her host, obligingly placing the infant on her lap. The baby puckered his dark brows, began a scowl, thought better of it, and gurgled instead. She played at blowing at her watch to open it, to his intense amusement, and his father sat glaring moodily at the pair of them. Suddenly he began to speak again, this time with a newer and more human note in his voice.

"Yes, it's just two years since it all happened," he said, "and I feel it breaking out of me at last. Two years since she left me and the little Jacques there. That came of marrying a girl from the border, everyone said. Why couldn't I have gone to church with a girl from my own village? Why indeed! But you should have seen her, Madame! She looked more Italian than French, it is true; but what hair, what eyes, what a way of walking!"

"Was she dark?" Emily asked, stroking the baby's crop of coal-black fluff.

"The eyes, yes. For her hair she made it a splendid gold—did something to it out of a bottle, you understand. It was beautiful—such a gold! We were happy together the first year, except when she got her wild fits. . . ." He trailed off into silence and stared at the fire a while, then began again—

"She had gipsy blood, and every now and then she used to go off with her people—they were travelling players. There was a cousin, an evil-eyed fellow"—Maurel made the sign as he spoke—"and he had courted her before she took up with me. It angered me she should go with them, and when she came back after the second time I said many things to her. Little Jacques was soon to be born, and I swore she should not leave the house again until he had come safely into the world. I took away her clothes and locked her in her room. I see now I was, perhaps, a fool. So as soon as she was well enough after the child's birth she gave me the slip and went off—for good. She left a letter behind. . . . I saw I was a fool. I waited—one month, two, three, and I saw she never meant to come back. Then I cursed her for a woman who had no love for her child, and I gave up my little cottage just outside the village. I had a

few olive-trees, and did well with my violets and stocks beneath them. I got work as a shepherd up here. I have done with women, so first I thought I would not let you in; and then you looked at me. . . . It seemed to me you had the same look in your eyes as little Jacques."

"And she—if she came back," Emily said, "you would see something in her eyes and forgive her and take her in, would you not?"

His face hardened so that it seemed literally to darken. "Ah, that—never!" he said.

Emily's ankle by now felt much better, and she rose and began to wrap her scarf about her neck and took up her coat, from which the dew moisture had left off steaming. She laid little Jacques into his father's arms and slipped into her coat.

"I may call and see you and little Jacques again if I pass this way?" she asked.

Maurel hesitated, and the baby suddenly gave a crow of pleasure and waved his little arms towards her.

"Why, yes," said Auguste Maurel.

It may be imagined that there was great consternation at the convent over her late appearance, and that many were the remedies applied to her ankle, which was really only strained and not sprained at all. She was kept in bed next day, however; but the day after, promising not to go far, she strolled through the village and along the main road. The eucalyptus-trees and palms, the mimosas, and the olives that bordered it were thick with dust, and soon she struck off along a grassy track and found herself at a typical little Provençal farmhouse, with cream-washed

walls and faded blue shutters and a roof of brown fluted tiles. A naked vine sprawled like a great spider's web over the poles that made a kind of airy loggia in front; its shadow exactly repeated the pattern over the hard-stamped earth. The little house had a deserted air; its door was nailed up and its windows only held a jagged edge of glass along each cross-bar. Beneath the vine was a rude trestle table; and on the ground, her arms outflung along the table and her head upon them, knelt a woman, quite silently. Emily stood hesitating; then at some sound she made the woman raised her head and stared at her with eyes red and swollen with crying.

She was dressed in a blue linen gown that was little more than a wrapper belted in at the waist, and it showed every line of her firm, beautiful figure. Her throat was bare and brown, and her brows very black, but from under the faded green handkerchief wrapper about her head some suspiciously canary-coloured locks had strayed. There are moments when the true looker-on knows things far more clearly by intuition than by any telling. Emily knew this was Auguste Maurel's wife. And, like her husband, the wife felt the strength of Emily's lack of self—that lack which is more powerful to move the world than any possession. They sat long upon the table, side by side, and talked.

It appeared the travelling company Auguste's wife belonged to was passing through the place and

going to give a performance, for it was fair time, and already the square was full of booths clustered round a primitive merry-go-round. And she had slipped away, meaning to get one look at her old home without being seen, and she found it like this—and where were Auguste and the little Jacques?

"You want to be with them again?" Emily asked.

Here the thin, brown, beautiful face, with its narrow nose and full long lips, hardened just as Auguste's had done.

"That—never!" she said. "There are indignities a woman cannot forgive. If I had been of his people—but I was of free blood, see you?"

"Yet you would like to see little Jacques—just once?" Emily asked cunningly.

She turned away and busied herself tying the kerchief at a more coquettish angle over her yellow head. "I should not mind. He was a nice little baby," she answered indifferently.

"Bah!" said the cunning Emily. "Babies are all very much alike, and, anyhow, he couldn't recognise you and you probably wouldn't know him!"

"Indeed! And who was she, who had obviously—yes, obviously—never married, to talk of things she didn't understand? All babies alike, indeed! Why, her Jacques had the funniest little three-cornered smile and a way of screwing up his black eyes at you. . . . And as to not knowing him—she would know him by touch among all the babies in the world if the *Bon Dieu* were to strike her blind to-morrow. . . ."

They parted good friends, owing to Emily's meekness under this whirl of snubbing, and that afternoon, lying in the sun of an olive slope,

[Continued on page 26.]



On the ground, her arms outflung along the table and her head upon them, knelt a woman.



FROM THE PAINTING, "VOCATION," BY EMILIEN VICTOR BARTHÉLEMY, EXHIBITED AT THE PARIS SALON, 1923. (ARTIST'S COPYRIGHT RESERVED.)



"THE PATCHWORK QUILT."

FROM THE PAINTING BY LONGLEY. (COPYRIGHT RESERVED.)

Christmas Cheer in Adversity: Radio for Travellers in Distress.

FROM THE PAINTING BY C. E. TURNER.—DETAILS OF THE ETHOPHONE V. BROADCAST RECEIVER SUPPLIED BY COURTESY OF BURNDIPT, LTD.



DITCHED—BUT HAPPY, THANKS TO A "PORTMANTEAU" BROADCAST RECEIVER: SNOW-BOUND MOTORISTS ENTERTAINED BY RADIO MUSIC IN THE WARMTH OF A TWIG FIRE, WHILST THE CHAUFFEUR SEEKS HELP.

If it should fall to the lot of any of our readers to be "ditched" whilst journeying by car over snow-covered roads, we hope that they will be able to avail themselves of a broadcast entertainment in the manner of the happy party illustrated above. On the way to participate in Christmas festivities, these guests are delayed by the car coming to grief through running into a ditch hidden by snow, and whilst the chauffeur seeks help, congenial warmth is obtained from a twig fire, and entertain-

ment listened to with the aid of a "portmanteau" broadcast receiver and loud speaker. The aerial is a length of wire suspended from a tree branch, with the near end of the wire connected to the receiver. Owing to its portability, the "Ethophone V." broadcast receiver shown in our picture may be used inside the car whilst travelling, or taken into any house as an additional form of entertainment. The usefulness of a broadcast receiver in unforeseen circumstances is manifest.

The Colour of Music: Schumann in Terms of Paint.

FROM THE WATER-COLOURS BY GUSTAV ADOLF MOSSA. ARTIST'S COPYRIGHT RESERVED.



"PARADISE AND THE PERI": MOSSA'S INTERPRETATION OF SCHUMANN'S CANTATA.

THESE water-colour translations of Schumann's music are the bold experiment of Gustav Adolf Mossa, who calls himself, with a shade of arrogance, "the Painter of Nice." Until he amazed, and somewhat scandalised, the art world eleven years ago with his marvellously lighted and delicately handled impressions of Bruges, he was known principally as a designer of cars for the Nice Carnival. Maeterlinck remarked, in an epigram of appreciative criticism, that Mossa had painted, not Bruges la Morte, but Bruges

du Soleil. Similarly, Mossa has touched the profound and mystical genius of Schumann with a lighter hand, and the result is the most interesting series of drawings here reproduced. For "Paradise and the Peri" he has made two designs, based on the music of Schumann and the poem of Thomas Moore, but with a difference, as regards both musical score and text. The Peri of Schumann's cantata was a spirit impersonal and symbolic, who sought to win entrance to Paradise by some gift most pleasing to the Creator. Mossa's Peri in "Ravissement"

[Continued below.]



"THE CROWS": A SCHUMANN-HANS ANDERSEN MOTIF, FOUNDED ON "RÊVE MATERNEL."

is super-earthly. About her floats all the faëry of the East; she is a splendid Sultana, borne upwards by rosy ibises, on an ecstasy, to heaven. Schumann ignored Moore's decorations: Mossa has restored and heightened them to suit his scheme. In "The Treasure" he has recalled the "Arabian Nights," with the luxury of costume, caskets, and jewels. Not there was the Peri to find her atoning gift, but in a tear of the repentant. Something essential of Schumann is lacking here, and one asks, how far can the painter hope to translate the

musician? The kinship between the Fine Arts is an old problem. Cicero speaks of the "common bond" between all Arts, and he only echoes the Greeks. Plato admitted the relationship, but at the same time, in effect, he advised the shoemaker to stick to his last. Simonides called painting "silent poetry" and poetry "speaking painting." Aristotle makes a distinction very appropriate to our present subject when he says that, while the painter imitates the outward embodiment or sign of the passion, the musician or poet imitates

[Continued opposite.]

The Colour of Music: Schumann in Terms of Paint.

FROM THE WATER-COLOUR BY GUSTAV ADOLF MOSSA. ARTIST'S COPYRIGHT RESERVED.



"PARADISE AND THE PERI—THE TREASURE": BASED ON SCHUMANN'S MUSIC AND MOORE'S POEM.

Continued

the very passion itself. Lessing has laid down the limitations of the whole question, and Thackeray generalised upon it with a charming freedom in "The Newcomes," when he said, "Milton wrote in bronze. I am sure Virgil polished off his 'Georgics' in marble—sweet, calm shapes! exquisite harmonies of line! As for the 'Æneid,' that, Sir, I consider to be so many bas-reliefs, mural ornaments, which affect me not so much."

And you remember, in the Introduction to "The Bride of Lammermoor," the discussion which Dick Tinto and Mr. Peter Pattieson held on this knotty point, Dick arguing that his pencil was a more direct and efficient instrument than the author's pen. To which Peter (that is, Sir Walter Scott) replied that Tinto "confounded the operations of the pencil and the pen." Thereupon Tinto, who was of the anecdotal school of painters

[Continued on page 24.]

THE GNOME IN THE FLOWER-BED: A FAIRY STORY FOR CHRISTMAS EVE.

FROM THE DRAWINGS BY GOLIA, THE ITALIAN ARTIST.



ONCE upon a time there was a funny old Gnome who lived in a magic flower-bed. Whether he was really and truly a gnome you will not know until you have come to the end of the story. One can never be sure of anything in a fairy tale until you have read the last word. But we can be sure of one thing. The magic flower-bed was really magic: the flowers kept fresh and sweet, even in the depth of winter when the snow was on the ground.



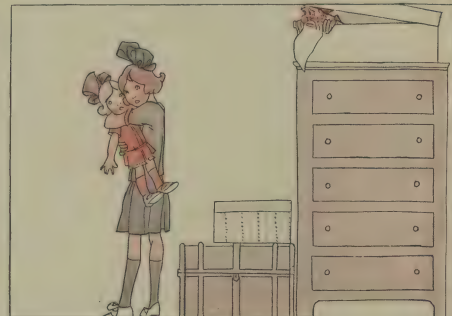
There he sat for months and months and months, not daring to move; for every half-hour the Policeman on the beat passed by the window. How the Gnome's heart fluttered and how he longed that the dear poor little girl's Daddy would grow suddenly rich. Christmas drew near, and one day a rich looking person in a fur coat came in. "How much is that gnome?" said he. "Two sequins and a bob," replied the shopman respectfully. So on Christmas Eve our good Gnome found himself set on a sweet little bed in a sweet little room.



What a delightful surprise Lisette had when she saw her darling Gnome at her very own window! Hardly believing her eyes, she jumped up to welcome him, and bade him come in. "Wouldn't you like to go to the country, Lisette?" he asked, when their first shyness had worn off. "Oh, yes," she replied, "I'd love to, but I can't afford it." "Nonsense!" cried he, "take my hand, and in a moment we shall be at my home, where the flowers never wither, even when winter comes." So off they flew.



Now when spring had come, the flowers were still fresh and sweet. That is not wonderful; for spring is the time for fresh flowers; but perhaps you expected that because they bloomed in winter they would wither in spring. Not at all. These flowers paid no attention to the seasons. But our funny old Gnome did. Although he did not look young, in the spring his fancy turned to thoughts of adventure, just as the poet tells us a spring man's fancy turns. So he sat down and made plans.



But, alas! the little girl fast asleep in the bed, dreaming of Santa Claus, was not the Gnome's little friend. She was a rich little girl with many toys, but not really spoiled; for, although she rather liked her Gnome at first sight, she was faithful to her old doll, who lived in a big cardboard box on the top of the cupboard. When Clotilde—for that was the rich child's name—took out her old doll, she stuffed Master Gnome into the cardboard box. There he made new plans.



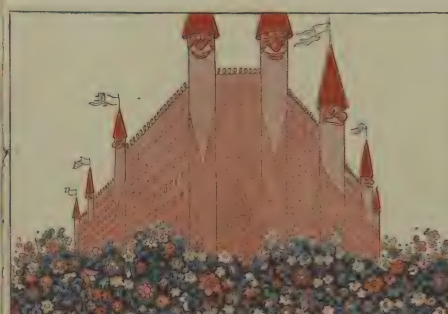
But dreadful things were in store. A wicked old witch had taken possession of the Gnome's retreat, and all the flowers were withered. Lisette could hardly keep back her tears of disappointment, but she tried to be brave, for her Gnome very valiantly fell upon the Witch in mortal combat. He took a painful wound, but still fought on, edging the witch nearer and nearer the withered flower-bed. The moment her foot touched the flowers, they took fire, and the witch was burnt up shrieking. Lisette watched, trembling,



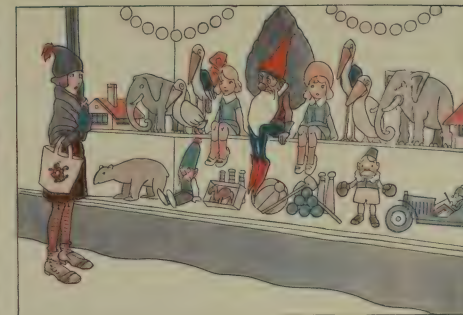
"It is nice here in the country," thought he to himself, "but it's dull at times. I have not been to Town for—let me see—at least a thousand years, a longish while. Spring has come, I must not be behind." So he trudged over hill over dale to the City. But, oh, how changed he found it! The motor-traffic quite confused his old noddle, he got in the way of a car, which was against the law, and soon he had the police and a howling mob after him.



When he saw Clotilde coming to put her old doll back into the box, he slipped out, and made his escape up the chimney. "Surely," exclaimed Clotilde, "I put old Gnome into the box, but he isn't there. I must have left him downstairs." But she didn't like him enough to go down to look for him at once. Meanwhile he sat on the tiles, looking over the City. "Now, at last," he said, "I can seek for pleasanter adventures than have been my lot since I came to Town."



Now appeared a great wonder. For, as the flames sank down, there arose from the ashes a splendid Castle, the Gnome's Castle, many-windowed and crowned with eight turrets, all in the likeness of a Gnome, not pretty, but very imposing and wearing a friendly smile. "Enter, Princess Lisette," cried he, "and be presented at Court!" As she spoke, Lisette found herself alone. She felt a little afraid, but dared not disobey. She entered the Palace door, and found herself in a lofty hall where, robed in state, sat—



How he ran! Poor old bean, he tore along, looking for a place to hide. A toy-shop! The very thing! "I can easily pass for a toy-gnome," thought he; "if I slip in there and sit down among the toys in the window." No sooner said than done, and by good luck the shopman was not looking. He got stiff and sore sitting so still, and a toy motor bothered him, but he was safe. A dear little girl loved him, and longed to buy him, but she was too poor.



"I wonder," thought the Gnome, "whether I could find out my little friend who was too poor to buy me. She will be kinder than Clotilde." When he had picked out what he took to be a poorish part of the City, off he flew thither, and peeped in at many windows. At last he found a very humble room. But it was neat and tidy, with a flower-pot on the window-sill, a basin, lamp and ink-bottle on the table, and a pot on the stove. And there, oh joy, sat his little friend busy knitting!



the Gnome himself, looking very grand and terrible, but still kindly. "Welcome, Princess Lisette," he said, holding out his hand. "But," said she, hesitating, "I am no princess, only a poor little girl who knits for her living." As she spoke, in the Gnome's place sat the handsome young Prince in Fairyland. "Come," he said, "dearest Lisette, come, share my fortunes and be my wife. I was turned into a gnome until I could meet a girl who would never pretend to be what she was not." And they lived happy ever after.

The Colour of Music: Schumann in Terms of Paint.

FROM THE WATER-COLOURS BY GUSTAV ADOLF MOSSA. ARTIST'S COPYRIGHT RESERVED.



GOETHE'S "FAUST": "LA RONDE DES SYLPHERS," FOUNDED ON SCHUMANN'S TONE-POEM.

Continued.]

and believed that "every picture should (and could) tell a story," produced a sketch, and was deeply annoyed because Mr. Pattinson could make nothing of it unless he were told the subject. To-day we are more ready to admit that one Art can produce the effect of another, in this most crucial instance of music and painting. Poetry and painting present a closer analogy, sculpture and painting are nearer still; but to acknowledge that music can be interpreted by means of paint requires a finer susceptibility: a greater faith, if not more

credulity. To interpret painting by music is simpler, witness the suite, "Pictures from an Exhibition," given last year at the Queen's Hall; but even there one was largely dependent on the explanations in the programme. Still, the expression is, at best, incomplete, for, as a French writer has remarked, "Mossa's Schumann in the 'Peri' is not the sentimental, sweet-sad composer: it is a Schumann of goldsmith work, jewelled, filigreed, and of a preciousness a little Byzantine." The artist comes nearer the essential composer in "Les Corbeaux," a Schumann-Hans

[Continued below.]

INSPIRED BY SCHUMANN AND HEINE: "THE SARCOPHAGUS."

Continued.]

Andersen motif, founded on "Rêve Maternel." It is a *tour de force* in contrast—against the exquisite warmth and light of the cradle scene are silhouetted the forbidding carrion-crows, croaking to the young mother, "Your angel will become a brigand: he will hang and we shall pick his bones." "La Ronde des Sylphes," from the second part of "Faust," Scene I., is a moonlight sonata in water-colour. Mossa follows Goethe's stage direction—"Twilight: Faust, bedded on flowery turf . . . circle of hovering spirits in

motion: graceful, diminutive figures. Ariel: chant, accompanied by Æolian harps." The artist adds a probable Byronic reminiscence in "the castled crag of Drachenfels." So far the design is literary: its mystical, silvery tone, however, translates Schumann's tone-poem not inaptly. More satisfying, though still only approximate, is "The Walnut Tree." In this the painter has suggested the trembling romance of young love, symbolised by the quivering foliage, the breeze-stirred meadow, and the girl building castles in the air. Her

[Continued opposite.]

The Colour of Music: Schumann in Terms of Paint.

FROM THE WATER-COLOUR BY GUSTAV ADOLF MOSSA. ARTIST'S COPYRIGHT RESERVED.



"THE WALNUT TREE": A COLOUR INTERPRETATION OF SCHUMANN'S MUSIC—YOUNG LOVE'S ROMANCE.
Continued.

fate, as yet unseen, moves to overtake her from the shadows. But the most impressive and adequate of all these tentative designs is the Heine-Schumann inspiration, "The Sarcophagus." Here poet and composer bury their Love, their Pain, their Joy, the old, sad dreams, the lying songs, the vain hopes, all dead! "A tomb for them, huge as the tun of Heidelberg, and bearers sturdy as St. Christopher! Let them take up their ponderous

burden and hurl it into the sea! But, before it is engulfed, let the world know why it is so heavy: it is because it holds my Joy, my Sorrow, and my Love." The sarcophagus is inscribed with Alpha and Omega, and with the words, "Amor, Gaudium, Dolor." The cowed bearers carry the armorial shields of Leipzig, Dresden, Düsseldorf and Bonn, halting-places in the life of Heine and Schumann.

J. D. S.

she had the inspiration for her play. It occurred to her that Maurel and his wife were both such obstinate nurse-their-vengeance kind of people that it would be no earthly good decoying them together and saying "Bless you, my children!" No, it had to be achieved through little Jacques. This was where she, in her rôle of *deus ex machina*, came in. She would write a play with a part in it for little Jacques and would get Auguste and his wife to come in the audience. Little Jacques being hardly able to toddle and quite incapable of any speech more intelligible than "Goo-goo!" his part had to be written under certain limitations, but Emily thought of a way to surmount them all. The only question was whether the censor, in the shape of the Reverend Mother, would pass it; for, in the play, as Emily had thought of it, there had to be a male creature—and was that possible in a conventual production? The Reverend Mother hemmed and ha'd when interviewed that night after dinner. Well, it was true that the eldest of the Lycée pupils was to deliver an oration in his uniform, but that was not the same thing as mixing the sexes in one play. . . . What was the play about? Emily gave her an outline of the plot, and described the kind of effect she wished to convey.

"It is charming—quite charming," Reverend Mother assured her, and sat down in thought.

"*Tiens, ma mère*," said Emily, "has not Simone Bernardy got a brother? Why should they not act it together?"

"Simone is already acting in the first play," objected Reverend Mother; but her face cleared.

"She has quite a tiny part. Anyone can take that, but Simone is so pretty she will do so splendidly for my play. Oh, say yes, *ma mère*!"

"But what about a baby? We have none young enough in the school, and would any mother care to lend us one?"

"Leave that to me," said Emily magnificently; "the baby shall be my affair."

And so it was settled, and in a couple of days the play was written and the rehearsals had begun.

Many times Emily thanked heaven that it was not English school-children she was rehearsing. The difference between the wooden self-conscious theatricals seen in England and the intuitive artistry with which these little French bourgeois went through their parts!

As for Emily, she was so excited at the thought of all that was at stake that on the great day itself she was in a positive fever. All seemed going well; repeated visits to Auguste had made him hanker once more after the gay world, and as a great favour to Emily little Jacques was lent her for the day (they had used a big doll at rehearsals), and little Jacques's proud father had promised to come and see his son's début. Little

Jacques's mother, also as a favour to Emily, was coming for the performance, for that artful spinster had pointed out to her how valuable her professional criticism would be on the acting.

"What is it called, your play?" she asked.

"Hearth-Magic," Emily answered. "It's a sort of fairy-play."

"Hearth-Magic," she repeated thoughtfully. "I'll be sure and come."

By two o'clock the big room at the Lycée was about full, and away at the back was ensconced Auguste, his hair brushed sleekly down with evilly scented oil and new blue cross-garterings on his legs. Emily's next anxiety was to steer his wife to a place where neither could catch sight of the other; and this, too, was successfully accomplished, since she insisted on watching from the wings. "I do not want all the old neighbours talking to me," she explained.

She was quietly dressed in a shabby but beautifully fitting black woollen gown, and a little fashionable cheap black hat crammed over her yellow locks.

To Emily the first part of the programme passed like a dream. She knew that an innocuous little play and the equally innocuous farce that followed were received with kindly applause from the proud, perspiring audience of parents, and that then, all too soon, it was the time of "Hearth-Magic." The curtain rose on the first act.

The scene was the heart of a wood, called "Fool's Paradise," where the last of the fairies lived together in a little hut copied from the little hermitage of Auguste Maurel. Emily had painted a simple back-cloth of tree-trunks and a really superior glimpse of the hut, with a stretch of blue distance showing beyond its fluted roof and enormous chimney almost as big as itself. The last of the fairies consisted of a Queen-Fairy who ruled over this domain, and the three legendary Princesses of Les Baux, of whom Mistral sings, the third daughter, the chief part, being played by the fair-haired Simone.

The moon (manipulated by a lay-sister) rose slowly behind a gauze sky, and the fairies all danced in a circle. As they danced, the figure of a male—a thing in breeches—was seen creeping behind the trees. There was quite a thrill among the audience at sight of it, so alien was it to the atmosphere of convent theatricals. Sylvestre Bernardy, Simone's brother, was a fair, good-looking boy, big for his age. Emily had made him don a black wig, lent by the village barber, and, dressed as a human wayfarer, he really looked not unlike a childish edition of Auguste Maurel. It was that childishness of the actors which proved to be the most valuable asset in the play. Emily had feared that it might rather detract from the effect of reality to the two members of the audience she wished chiefly to sway, but she found she had been mistaken. It served to show them the *naïveté* and childishness of their own actions. The fairies all danced into the cottage, with the exception of the Fairy Princess, and she was left to collect glow-worms for the illumination of the supper-table. She was assisted somewhat perfunctorily in this task by the Wayfarer, with whom it was evident she already had a slight acquaintanceship. There was really rather a charming little piece of dialogue for them, in which the Wayfarer begged her to come down into the valley with him and be his wife; while she, wringing her little hands, reminded him of the disgrace it was for a fairy to break her fairyhood.

"And sometimes, if the moon were bright, I should want to come back and play," she told him. "I feel a stirring in my blood like little wings opening, and then I should have to go away."

"But you would always come back," said the Wayfarer; "the door will be on the latch and a fire on the hearth. And perhaps there will be that by the hearth which will always draw you back . . . little human hands are stronger than fairy wings."

She yielded, and hand in hand they slipped away, and the curtains came together across an empty stage, with a triumphant moon shining upon it.

Auguste Maurel's wife, still unsuspecting, but with her Latin fancy quick to see what she supposed to be the unconscious parallel, gave Emily an encouraging criticism between the acts.

"But if your play is to be true to life, it will not be a success, that marriage there," she ended. "The man thinks he will give her liberty—*pouf!*"

The next act showed the interior of the Wayfarer's house. There was a big walnut cradle on the hearth, with its back to the audience, for Emily did not wish to try little Jacques's patience in bringing him on in this scene; and the cradle contained nothing more human than a pillow.

It was soon evident that all was not well in this household, and Emily had contrived to let the audience have both sides of the question in the dialogue.

Auguste—as she thought of him to herself, though he was billed as a Wayfarer—was hurt and puzzled by the caprices of his wife, and she on her part was angered by the inconsistency of the man, who had promised her her fling and now reproached her.

"The moon is in my blood to-night, see you," she explained. Her husband promptly put the shutters over the window and barred the obtrusive moon out, thereby showing how stupid it is of a man to treat his wife's spiritual ills with physical remedies. Seeing this he changed his tactics, and began begging her for his sake not to go out dancing with her fairy friends that night. She was softened, when unfortunately he added that it was so awkward for him to be left alone to cope with baby, and had no one to get his breakfast when he went to work in the morning. She at once announced her intention of going to a fairy revel that was to last the whole week-end. He lost his temper, picked her up, put her in the next room and locked the door on her. Then he pocketed the key, flung on his hat and went out.

A sound of singing now arose from without, a light tap came on the shutters, which opened as though by magic—which, indeed, was what they were supposed to be doing—the Queen-Fairy leapt lightly into the room, followed by her satellites. A tap of the wand on the bed-room door, and that too flew open, and the young wife danced out. She had discarded her workaday attire for the glittering robes she had worn in the first act, and the other fairies seized her by the hands and bade her go with them. Yet she hesitated, one eye on the cradle, ran towards it, knelt beside it. The Queen-Fairy urged her to take her baby with her—to leave altogether this husband who was so exacting.

"Yes, I'll leave him," cried the young wife, still in her tantrum, and made as though to pick her child up, then drew back. "No! I can't take everything from him, poor man," she murmured, "I'll leave him baby. He loves that better than he does me." And with one passionate

(Continued on Page 42.)



With one passionate embrace of the unresponsive pillow, she danced through the window.

FAIR BRITAIN.



CHILDHOOD.

*From the Portrait of Betty, daughter of
G. Lawrence Groom, Esq.,
by Charles Buchel.*

Christmas in Old Times: Mistletoe and the Yule Log.

DRAWINGS BY A. FORESTIER.



MISTLETOE CUT WITH GOLD SICKLES: A DRUID RITE.



FOR CHRISTMAS: A SLEDGE-LOAD OF EVERGREENS.



PAGAN SACRIFICES OF OXEN TO THOR TURNED TO CHRISTIAN USES: PRIESTS ADAPTING YULETIDE CUSTOMS.

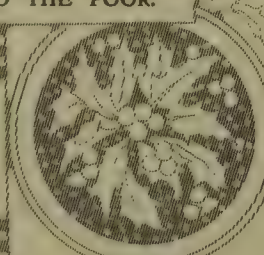
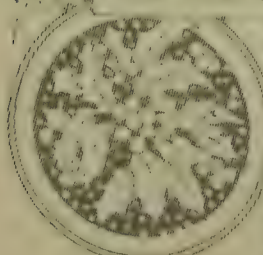


THE YULE LOG: A PAGAN CUSTOM APPLIED TO CHRISTMAS.



CHRISTMAS CHARITY: GIFTS TO THE POOR.

The use of mistletoe at Christmas originated in the pagan sun-worship of the Druids, who regarded it as an emblem of renaissant life. At the winter solstice, the cutting of the mistletoe was performed with much ceremony, including the sacrifice of two white bullocks, feasting and singing. One of the Druids cut the mistletoe with a golden sickle, and others held a white cloth below so that it should not fall to the ground. Only oak mistletoe was used, and numbers of people searched for it in the forests. Others brought in evergreens for decorations—holly, fir, and ivy—the symbols of everlasting life. The pagan feast of Yule (literally: "revolution of the wheel," and so "turn of the year") was adapted by Christian priests to the purposes of Christmas.



Christmas in Old Times: The Return from the Boar Hunt.

DRAWN BY A. FORESTIER.



BRINGING HOME THE BOAR ON CHRISTMAS EVE: AN ITEM OF THE MORROW'S FEAST.

From very early days the boar's head was an indispensable item in the pagan feast of Yule, which developed into the Christian festival of Christmas. The custom survived far on into the Middle Ages, and is commemorated in the names of many old English inns, such as the famous Boar's Head in Eastcheap, immortalised by Shakespeare in "Henry IV." as the scene of Falstaff's carousals with Prince Hal and their companions. It was doubtless only the gradual extinction of the wild boar from English forests that led to the disappearance of the once favourite dish from the Christmas board. In Anglo-Saxon and later times, the hunting of the boar in preparation for the morrow's feast was a time-honoured event.

FAIR BRITAIN.



YOUTH.

*From the Portrait of "Phyllis,"
by W. E. Webster.*

FAIR BRITAIN.



THE BRIDE.

*From the Portrait of Lady Louis Mountbatten,
by Philip A. de Laszlo, M.V.O.*

Christmas in Old Times: Minstrelsy, Chess, and Juggling.

DRAWINGS BY A. FORESTIER.



THE MINSTRELS! WELCOME CHRISTMAS GUESTS.



AN OLD CHRISTMAS PASTIME: A GAME OF CHESS.



THE CHRISTMAS FEAST IN OLD ENGLAND: A GIRL JUGGLER AMUSES THE COMPANY.

Minstrels were ever welcome guests in the houses of the great during the Middle Ages. They added to the general gaiety with their songs and music, and the feats of acrobats who accompanied them. In the same drawing the children are seen roasting chestnuts on the hearth. Chess was a favourite pastime among the Anglo-Saxons. They gambled away their money, and even their freedom, over it, and furious quarrels leading to bloodshed often followed a game, so much so that restrictions had to be imposed on chess-playing. Juggling was one of the entertainments at a Christmas feast, in which, no doubt, the children of the household would be allowed to participate, although, as the artist points out, he has found no actual evidence of the fact.

Christmas in Old Times: The Dance and the Christmas Tree.

DRAWINGS BY A. FORESTIER.



CHRISTMAS DANCING IN THE OLDEN DAYS: CIRCLING ROUND THE CENTRAL FIRE TO THE STRAINS OF A HARP.



AN 11th CENTURY CHRISTMAS TREE HUNG WITH APPLES AND TOYS: AN OLD CUSTOM.

"After the Christmas feast," writes Mr. Forestier, in a note on his drawings, "when the tables had been taken away, dances took place round the central fire. At the end of the dances the ladies kissed their partners (at least, we find it so in the fifteenth century in France). Among the Anglo-Saxons, the partners heartily kissed each other. The origin of the Christmas tree is uncertain, but it was probably connected with the Tree of Life in Paradise. Apples were, and are still, suspended from its branches. It may be a survival of the tree-worship common among the Northern nations at the time of the introduction of Christianity. It was essentially a German custom, and is mentioned in a scene of the tenth century by a German writer, Victor Scheffel."



FAIR BRITAIN.



IN THE FLOWER OF HER AGE.

*From the Portrait of
Her Grace the Duchess of Portland.
By Philip James de Loutherbourg, R.S.A.*



THE MAKING OF A MERMAID.

FROM THE PAINTING BY GONZALEZ MORENO. EXHIBITED AT THE PARIS SALON, 1923. (ARTIST'S COPYRIGHT RESERVED.)

A Vision of Indian fairyland by a french Artist: The Ramayana.



THE ACTION DASA-RATHA HAD TO EXPIATE: THE DEATH OF THE HERMIT'S SON.

"Slow and sadly by their bidding to the fatal spot I led.
Long and loud bewailed the parents by the cold, unconscious dead.
"And with hymns and holy water they performed the funeral rite,
Then with tears that burnt and withered, spake the hermit in his might:

"Sorrow for a son beloved is a father's direst woe,
Sorrow for a son beloved, Dasa-ratha, thou shalt know!
"See the parents weep and perish, grieving for a slaughtered son,
Thou shalt weep and thou shalt perish for a loved and righteous son!"

These two beautiful illustrations to the Ramayana, the great Indian epic, are the work of Mlle. Suzanne Lagneau, the French artist. The story of the Ramayana relates to the ancient traditions of two powerful races—the Kosalas and the Videhas—who lived in Northern India, between the twelfth and tenth centuries before Christ. Dasa-ratha, King of the Kosalas, had four sons, the eldest of whom was Rama, the hero of the poem. Janak, King of the Videhas, had a daughter named

Sita (miraculously born of a field furrow), whose hand was won by Rama, after a severe test. Rama is exiled for fourteen years through the dark intrigues of his enemies. The ancient King Dasa-ratha is so stricken with grief over the banishment of Rama, that he pines away and dies. In his last moments he recalls how, in his youth, he caused sorrow and death to an old hermit by accidentally killing his son when on a hunting-trip, and that the bereaved

From the Water Colour by Suzanne Lagneau, exhibited in the Paris Salon. Copyright strictly reserved by the Artist.

[Continued opposite 4]

Pictured by a french Artist: The Indian Epic fairy Tale.



THE VINDICATION OF SITA'S PURITY: RAMA'S QUEEN RETURNS INTO THE EARTH.

Oh! her woman's heart is bursting, and her day on earth is done,
And she pressed her heaving bosom, slow and sadly thus begun: . . .
"If in truth unto my husband I have proved a faithful wife,
Mother Earth! relieve thy Sita from the burden of this life!"

Continued.

father prophesied that Dasā-ratha should himself suffer grief for a well-loved son as the expiation of his crime. The second illustration shows the "Supplement to the Ramayana," which gives the poem a sad ending. Sita, Rama's Queen, lies under a cloud of dark suspicion, as she has lived in the palace of Ravan, the King of Ceylon, who carried her off. Rama sends her away to live in the forest, and she finds an asylum in the hermitage of Valmiki, where she gives

Then the earth was rent and parted, and a golden throne-arose,
Held aloft by jewelled Nagas as the leaves enfold the rose. . . .
Gods and men proclaim her virtue! But fair Sita is no more,
Lone is Rama's loveless bosom, and his days of bliss are o'er!

birth to twin sons, pupils of Valmiki, the poet and reputed author of the Epic. After many years Rama gives a great horse-sacrifice. Valmiki also attends the festival, and his pupils, Lava and Kusa, chant the great Epic. Rama recognises his sons, and he implores Valmiki to restore Sita. She appears, but her life has been darkened by unjust suspicion, and she invokes the Earth, which miraculously gave her birth, to take her back to its bosom.

DICKENS CHARACTERS CULLED FROM THE "ZOO": STUDIES BY A FAMOUS ANIMAL CARICATURIST.

FROM THE DRAWINGS BY J. A. SHEPHERD.



THE GAMECOCK AS SAM WELLER.
"Gee my compliments—Mr. Weller's compliments—to the Justice, and tell him I've spilt his bridle."



THE PUG DOG AS MR. PICKWICK.
"Mr. Pickwick beamed through his glasses."



THE PELICAN AS TONY WELLER.
Father of Sam Weller.
"Be werry careful o' wilders, Sammy."



THE CROW AS THE REVEREND MR. STIGGINS.
CALLED "THE SHEPHERD."
"If," said Mr. Stiggins, "if there is any one of them less odious than another, it is the liquor called rum."



THE COCKATOO AS SERJEANT DUZFUZ.
"Gentlemen, what does this mean? Chops and Tomato Sauce."



THE TOMTIT AS SIMON TAPPERTIT.
"Come!" said Mr. Tappertit
"... Do you know me, feller?"



THE RHINOCEROS AS MR. THOMAS GRADGRIND.
"Now, what I want is Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts."



THE SPOONBILL AS MR. TOOTS.
"At least, not to part, but—I don't exactly know what I was going to say, but it's of no consequence."



THE MACAW AS MRS. PIPCHIN,
SPOKEN OF AS "A GREAT MANAGER OF CHILDREN."
"Well, Sir," said Mrs. Pipchin to Paul, "how do you think you will like me?"
"I don't think I shall like you at all," said Paul.



THE WART-HOG AS MAJOR JOSEPH BAGSTOCK.
"Old Joe, Sir, needn't look far for a wife even now, if he was on the look-out."



THE CODFISH AS CAPTAIN JACK HUNSDY.
"Whereby," proceeded the voice, "why not? If so, what odds? Can any man say otherwise? No. Awast, then!"



THE PUFFIN AS CAPTAIN CUTTLE.
"Love! honour! and obey! Overhaul your catechism till you find that passage, and when found turn the leaf down."



THE TOAD AS JOHN WILLET.
"It'll clear at eleven o'clock. No sooner and no later. Not before and not afterwards."



THE POUTER PIGEON AS MR. MICAWBER ELEVATED AND DEPRESSED.
"Annual income, twenty pounds: annual expenditure, nineteen nineteen six: result—happiness.
Annual income, twenty pounds: annual expenditure, twenty pounds ought and six: result—misery."



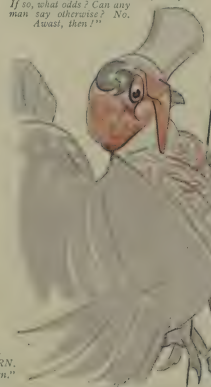
THE CROCODILE AS UMAH HEEP.
"I'm a very 'umble person."



THE GOSLING AS MR. GUPPY.
"The young man of the name of Guppy."



THE STORK AS MR. TULKINGHORN.
"The old man of the name of Tulkinghorn."



THE TURKEY AS MR. TURKEYDROP.
"A very gentlemanly man, celebrated almost everywhere for his deportment."



THE HERON AS TOM PINCH.
"Thy life is tranquil, calm and happy, Tom."



THE CRAB AS SAIRY GAMP.
"Mrs. Harris, I say, leave the bottle on the chimney-piece, and don't ask me to take none, but let me put my life to it when I am so disposed."



THE JACKDAW AS "THE ARTFUL DOOBLER."
"An! don't he know me? Oh, no! Not in the least! By no means! Certainly not!"



THE OWL AS MR. BUMBLE.
"If the law supposes that," said Mr. Bumble, "... the law is a ass, a idiot."



AN OLD ROBIN AS TOBY VECK, CALLED "TROTTY."
From his pace, which meant speed, if it didn't make it."

J.A.S.



WHERE "ROSES OF DECEMBER" BLOOM: A GREETING TO THE MORN.

FROM THE PAINTING BY HENRY GASTON DARIEN IN THE PARIS SALON, 1923. ARTIST'S COPYRIGHT RESERVED.



In the 19th Century my lady found Pears Soap matchless for the Complexion. The modern out-of-doors active girl tells the same story. Her complexion although having more severe demands made upon it is still served best by the use of Pears Soap

Pears'



SOAP

embrace of the unresponsive pillow, she danced through the window, followed by her friends.

Now, here Emily had scored a point against Auguste, though not quite fairly. He had made it his principal complaint that his wife had left not only him but her baby. Emily—without in the least being sure that she had any grounds for it—made this into an argument in her favour, a proof of compunction and unselfishness. The husband came back into the room, some flowers as a peace offering in his hand—here, with equal unscrupulousness, Emily was scoring a point against Auguste's wife. He ran to the door, found it unlatched, burst into the next room and out again like a rocket, hurling his bouquet from him in rage. Over the cradle he

the smart little toque, which had been pushed off by her nervous fingers, lying unheeded on the boards.

Then a great cry rang through the room—a cry that stilled all other sounds into an awed hush—

"Mon bébé! Mon petit bébé!"

She ran forward on to the stage, sweeping the two astonished children right and left, and then, all her whirlwind actions suddenly controlled, she very quietly gathered little Jacques to her breast. And she soothed him as though by a miracle. He turned his little shock black head and pushed it contentedly against her. His sobs died away, and one tiny mottled hand clasped over her fingers. She was heedless of everything—

the interrupted play, the publicity of her position, the gaping audience—heedless of all save Jacques—until Auguste, as stirred and self-forgetful as she, broke upon the stage. Whether he or she gave the first gleam of reconciliation Emily did not know—all their arms seemed to be round each other at once, and little Jacques in a fair way to be smothered to death.

"Tiens!" ejaculated a woman's voice in the audience, breaking the spell of silence. "It's Maurel and his wife—there's a good ending for you!"

And Emily rang down the curtain amidst a storm of genuinely sympathetic applause. Maurel was a trifle embarrassed as soon as he could grasp mundane affairs again, but his wife was in her element. By her sensational re-entry into domesticity both sides of her nature were pleased at once. Reverend Mother was so charmed with little Jacques that she forgave Emily's stratagem, and kept the whole family to supper in the boarders' dining-room, though Auguste, being a man, had to eat at a little table apart, with his back to the rest of the world!

And Emily slipped out before the meal was over and fled up to the mountain-slope, to a place she knew of where slim young oak-trees still gay with crisp fire-coloured leaves make a nest of beauty high on a craggy spur. She flew because by the convent rules she had to be in by nine unless she asked a sleepy sister to sit up for her. She reached it breathless, and for a while stood to gaze at the fairy trees, so transmuted from the glittering golden things of a sunlit day—all cold and ghostly—glimmering in the thin light of a young moon. The whisper of them came softly to her ears through the hushed night, and the glossy shine of the many-angled leaves under the moonlight almost hypnotised her lulled sight.

"It's a good world," she thought to herself, "and the glad Auguste and his canary-haired charmer are once more happy in it. And little Jacques too—but oh, it was a scandalous thing for me to do. . . ."

Emily threw herself down on the soft turf and pictured Maurel and his wife arriving back at their hut, babe in arm, and all their ardent

natures burning towards each other. She was not an ignorant woman or a foolish one, and she knew what she had put out of her life; but even now, seeing and recognising the glamour and also the deep satisfaction of what these people were feeling, she was swept by a passion of joy as keen if not as deep as theirs. All life was still hers to hold between her hands, and she knew, as she lay there in the lovely night that was for her a thing infinitely precious in itself, and not an enhancing background for some other human who would only make her more acutely aware of herself, that not for the wearing struggles, the tyrannies of love and possession, would she have relinquished this secret and rich place where lives the Looker-On.—[THE END.]



She stood for a while to gaze at the fairy trees glimmering in the thin light of a young moon.



She ran forward on to the stage and gathered little Jacques to her breast.

vowed his wife should never enter his house again, if she pleaded at the keyhole for a hundred and one years, and again he barred the window, this time against her.

Emily had difficulty with Auguste's wife that *entr'acte*. She declared she was being insulted and would go home. Emily flung her arms firmly round her, said her heart was full of love towards her, and insult far from her mind, and that Madame Maurel must stay for the third act and then judge. Before the curtain went up Emily took a peep through a hole in it at Auguste. He was sitting like a man in a dream, very pale, his glowing eyes staring in front of him. Emily gave the signal for the curtain to go up.

In the last act she had taken still more liberties with fact. Auguste was living in his old home, and it was miserably uncomfortable looking. A frying pan with a large hole in it hung on the wall; a child's bed was made up on two chairs; the remains of an untidy meal were on the table. The door opened, and the young husband came in, a rabbit swinging from his hand, his gun on his shoulder. He flung both down, kicked off his boots, left them where they lay, then picked up a dry crust from the table and ate it hungrily. Then he went over to the two chairs, sighing deeply, and began turning back some coverlets that were over it. Little Jacques was disclosed to the astonished audience, fortunately asleep.

"The poor innocent," exclaimed a pitying voice in the audience. "What a place for a child! What a miracle that he rolls not to the ground and breaks his little bones! And the poor man, he seems no better!" The youth of Simone and her brother, which betrayed them as mere actors, in spite of the excellence of their acting, had been forgotten by the sympathetic audience, who by now followed the fortunes of the mimic household with held breath.

As the husband clumsily lifted the baby up, a shadowy face flitted past the window, came back and peered through—the face of Simone. As her husband straightened himself she drew back out of his sight, only to reappear as he began clumsily to dandle the child. Little Jacques awoke and opened his black eyes to see the face of a strange boy above him. He at once broke into a lusty roar.

The critical moment had come. Simone was now supposed to rush in and, seizing her child, soothe and calm it, while the husband gazed stupefied at her; the child once calmed, its parents were to fall on each other's necks and the curtain was to go down on Simone setting the room to rights. Simone did open the door, hesitate as she should, then run forward and take little Jacques—but little Jacques refused to be soothed. He yelled, cried, his face grew red, the audience began to move uneasily, and Auguste half-rose in his seat.

Emily looked for Auguste's wife. She was standing in the wings, her eyes fixed on little Jacques; the perspiration glistened all over her face,



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The Duchess's Story

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By

MRS BELLOC-LOWNDES

Author of "The Uttermost Farthing," "The Chink in the Armour," "The Lodger," "From the Vasty Deep," etc., etc.

1.

DON'T they look happy?" said the Duchess in a low voice. But the Duke, gazing down the long, book-lined room where they always sat now after dinner, looked at his daughter and her lover, sitting in the firelight hand in hand, with gloomy, frowning eyes.

"From what I can make out, he's no private means at all. He spent the little money he had on two contested elections——"

"How romantic of him!" whispered the Duchess.

"On what are they to live? You've not thought of that!"

"On bread-and-cheese and kisses——"

"And a lot of good that will do them," growled the Duke.

"And then there'll be what you'll be made to allow them," she went on lightly.

"I know I'm old-fashioned," he said a trifle pompously, "but in my time—a man was supposed to support his wife."

This time she turned on him in the darkness, and, putting her hands on his breast, looked up into his face.

"Oh, *what* a story!" she exclaimed.

He looked so surprised that the Duchess began to laugh. Still, she did not think it an opportune moment to remind him that she herself had been a very great heiress.

"I can never make you remember that we have nine children," he said, but, even so, he pinched her cheek. It was still a very soft cheek.

"I think I've far more reason to remember it than you have," whispered she, in a somewhat curious tone. He looked at her puzzled. Perhaps one reason why the Duke was so happy with his Duchess was because she was still always surprising him by the odd things she said. Now she added suddenly something which he did understand, and which touched him. She lifted herself up on her toes and whispered in his ear: "But they're such good children, such pretty children, and such clever children—that I often wish they'd all been twins!"

"And what are these remarkable children of yours doing now?" he asked. It was his way always to speak of the children as if they were her children, as if his interest in them was, well?—purely platonic.

"Robin has lighted up the keep with Bengal lights, and then they're going to come in and dance till midnight."

"I won't have that!" he said sharply. "It's Sunday as well as New Year's Eve. I've always told you, Pansy, that I won't have the town shocked. It's up to us to set a good example."

When the Duke spoke in that voice the Duchess knew she must stop what she called "funning."

"They shan't dance, poor little things. We'll get round the fire and tell stories till it's time to open the door and let the New Year in." She waited a moment, and then added hesitatingly: "I think it's time they heard the queer tale of Great-Aunt Lavinia. I wonder if you remember that it happened seventy years ago to-night?"

"God bless my soul—so it did!" exclaimed the Duke. "But hadn't we better let bygones be bygones, my dearest?"

"Lavvy's sure to hear of it some day. It's a wonder no tiresome old gossip hasn't spoken of it to her already—if only because of her having the same name."

"I was always against her being called Lavinia," said the Duke crossly; "I was for calling her Pansy."

"And then there would have been 'old Pansy' and 'young Pansy.' I shouldn't have liked that at all!" exclaimed the Duchess.

"'Old Pansy'? 'Young Pansy'? What are you talking about? I don't understand what you mean!"

"You will, if you think a bit——"

And he did.

"I wouldn't mind it so much if he wasn't such a Radical and such an awful prig," he said irrelevantly; and again his eyes became fixed on the two young people sitting in the firelight.

"A prig makes by far the best husband," said the Duchess soberly.

"Is that what you've found—eh?" and he squeezed the little plump hand she had slipped into his.

"I haven't had enough experience of the other sort to be a real judge," she answered.

"I'm off to bed. No queer old tales for me!"

He began walking quickly down the long room. She ran after him and touched his arm. "James! James! That isn't the way to bed——?"

"I know it isn't; I'm only just going to give them my blessing—surely you don't object to that?"

But when he reached the pool of light round the great log fire, and when he saw the young couple get up, perhaps a thought reluctantly, and stand before him, he became, as was his way, tongue-tied, and his son-in-law elect wondered, deep in his heart, why such a clever, amusing person as the Duchess had ever married the Duke. Being a very serious-minded young man, he could not help fearing that it was just because the Duke *was* a duke, and the suspicion pained him, for he was becoming, in spite of

himself, very fond of his future mother-in-law.

"I'm afraid that I'm interrupting a very interesting conversation," said the Duke at last.

"We were talking about education." His daughter smiled, rather mischievously. She wasn't a bit afraid of her father.

"Education?" The Duke looked puzzled. When he had been courting the Duchess they had talked of something so very different—or, rather, she had, for he had been as shy with her then as he now was with other people.

And then the Duchess took a hand. "Gerald is very much interested," she observed, "in this new Education Bill. He has even helped to draft it."

"People are too much educated nowadays," said the Duke stoutly. "Look at me! I had practically no education, and yet I've got on quite well without it!"

"But you, James, are such an extraordinary man. You are one of those queer exceptions that somehow prove a rule," said the Duchess soothingly.



His daughter and her lover, sitting in the firelight hand in hand.

Her son-in-law-elect hoped that his face was not betraying the pain he felt at the thought that any woman should have so grossly to flatter a husband to put him in a good humour. But he was rather surprised when this particular husband turned round and observed rather crossly: "That may have been true once, my dear. But it's no longer true now, and well you know it!"

And then he kissed his daughter. "Well, good-night, and God bless you," he said rather solemnly. Making an effort over himself, he pressed warmly the hand of "the Radical prig," who he felt had stolen his dear little clever Lavvy, and turned away.

The Duchess put her hand through the Duke's arm, and went with him half-way down the long room. Then she gave a little skip and kissed the end of his long nose. "After all—if it wasn't for Lavvy's engagement, we should have had a large party here just now," she murmured; "you wouldn't have liked that?"

"Rather an expensive solitude," he said drily. "Like burning a house to roast a pig."

And, over by the fire, Gerald Arbuthnot, hearing the Duchess's sudden joyous peal of laughter, began to think that she must be *really* fond of the Duke, to laugh like that at anything such a dull man had said. Lady Lavinia's young man knew very little of this sort of people, but he had supposed that, on the whole, they were less fond of each other than were ordinary married couples. He was beginning to revise that view, as well as certain other of his opinions.

He said hesitatingly: "I wonder what your mother meant just now, darling—I mean about your father proving a rule?"

The girl looked just a little surprised. "Oh, she was only funning!"

"But what did he mean?"

"He meant that whatever may have been the case once, dukes don't matter now more than dustmen," she answered.

It was odd her dear, brilliant Gerald hadn't understood that? Though she was very much in love with him, Lady Lavinia was beginning to wonder whether Gerald, able as he was—quite the most coming young man in the House of Commons—was quick at the up-take, as her mother would have put it.

II.

"I don't feel as if I could tell you a ghost story to-night. But I will tell you a very strange, mysterious tale, and one that is connected with this house, and with ourselves."

There was a touch of solemnity in the voice of the Duchess. She looked round her young audience, and her glance rested for a moment on the one she still felt to be a stranger, for all that he would soon be her son-in-law—"a poor thing, but mine own," as she had more than once had occasion to remind herself when he had said something that had irritated her.

Suddenly, the youngest of those there, little Lady Mary, who was five years old, and a clever, inquisitive child, asked, as was not unusual with her, what her mother felt to be a somewhat inconvenient question.

"Does father know the story?"

"Of course he does! Why, he told it to me on our honeymoon, just after we had arrived here! But we have very, very seldom spoken of it since. Though it concerns a person who has long since been dead, and though it all happened long before he was born, I think you'll all think it very natural that he feels rather sensitive about it—"

There was a sudden increase of interest in the circle, and a boy's voice exclaimed: "Oh, mother! Tell us the story quick—quick!" *[Continued overleaf.]*



She turned on him and, putting her hands on his breast, looked up into his face.

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She looked round her doubtfully. What had made her feel to-night as if she must tell these young creatures that mysterious, piteous tale of far away and long ago? Perhaps because a day or two since, when turning over some old family letters which she had since destroyed, at her husband's wish, she had come across several poignant allusions to the story.

"You all know the picture in the dining-room which hangs just above where I sit?"

"You mean the portrait," interposed her eldest son, "of the duke who was called Old Magnifico?"

"Yes—of your great-grandfather. He was born the year that Marie Antoinette was executed; so now will any of you tell me what his age must have been just seventy years ago to-day?"

Under his breath, the one of her children who was most like his mother whispered: "Is this a disguised history lesson? If so, I'm off to bed!"

But he did not stir.

She went on:

"As you are all so hopelessly ignorant, I may as well tell you at once that Old Magnifico was fifty-six at the time my story opens, and that he had three

children—two sons, and a daughter who was much younger than her brothers, and who was the apple of his eye."

"Just like Lavvy and father," said a small voice.

"She was a lovely, poetic, dreamy-looking creature, and her name was Lavinia."

"Not a bit like our Lavvy," commented the same small voice.

"Hush!" said his mother—then she went on: "Old Magnifico—

not that we should have called him old nowadays—was a very proud man. He did not consider any of the young people who lived in this neighbourhood good enough to associate with his precious only daughter. So poor Lady Lavinia, when she was living down here in Sussex, led a curious, and, we should think nowadays, a most unnatural existence. She was only seen in the town on Sunday, when she was taken to church in a closed carriage."

"She must have had a very poor-spirited mother," observed Lady Lavvy slowly.

"Her mother had died five days after she was born, my dear, and she was brought up by an old governess called Miss Tubb. I've never been able to make out what sort of a woman Miss Tubb really was. But it's clear that 'Tubby,' as they called her, was very afraid of the Duke, and that poor Lavinia was very afraid of Tubby. I take it that this governess was a stupid, fussy woman. But there was one person of whom your great-aunt Lavinia was very fond. This was her French maid, Adèle Bon-temps, who was only a few years older than herself. The two were allowed to



"I will tell you a very strange, mysterious tale."

walk about as much as Lady Lavinia cared to do in the park—but nowhere else."

"That must have been very dull!" exclaimed, with spirit, little Lady Mary.

"Old Magnifico liked pomp and power," went on the Duchess, "so he was very pleased when he was asked to go on a special mission to St. Petersburg. By that time his daughter was eighteen, and might very

[Continued overleaf.]

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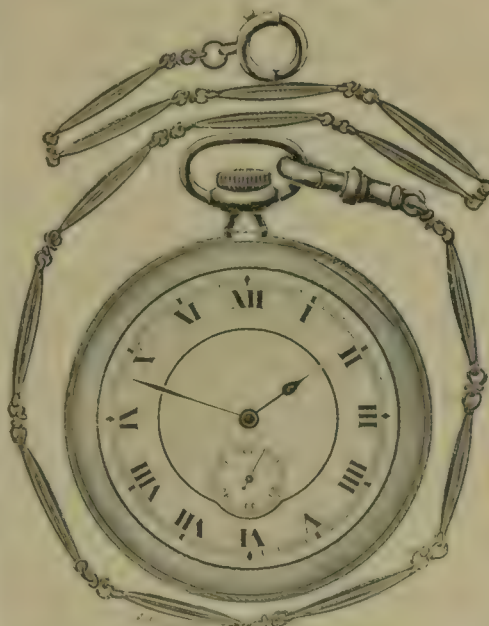
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well have gone with him. One of her aunts also wanted to have her in London. But the Duke would not hear of it, and he arranged that she should go on living down here with Miss Tubb, till he came back from Russia.

"Off he went in great state and splendour, and from wherever he and his suite stayed on the way he wrote his daughter an affectionate, pompous letter. Meanwhile, the poor girl led an unnaturally dull, secluded life, reading serious books with Miss Tubb, and going long walks in the park with Adèle Bontemps. They would be out for hours and hours, and later it became known that they sometimes, during that hot, dry summer, forded the river which forms"—she turned to her future son-in-law—"one of the boundaries to the park."

"I wonder why they did that," observed Lady Lavvy; "there's nothing to do, or to see, even now, on the other side of the river."

"In those days there lived on the other side of the river a young Scotch shepherd whom the Duke had brought south from Ardvilly, and with this shepherd it is supposed that Adèle Bontemps fell in love. Be that as it may, the three of them—the young lady from the Castle, her French maid, and the young shepherd—were seen once or twice together, by certain of the townspeople who had roamed out that way.

"Old Magnifico came back from Russia just before Christmas, and he posted down here in all haste, full of joy at the thought of seeing his beloved Lavinia again. But on Christmas Day he and his daughter had a quarrel—no one ever knew the reason why. It must have been a very serious quarrel, for during the whole week that followed she stayed upstairs in her bedroom, and in the sitting-room next to it—your rooms, Lavvy—virtually a



"The portrait of the Duke who was called Old Magnifico."

prisoner, even her food being taken in to her there by Miss Tubb. As for the maid, Adèle Bontemps, she was sent away in disgrace, the Duke's own man taking her to Southampton, and so, on the packet, to France."

"What a curious thing," mused the latter-day Lady Lavinia.

"It had long been arranged," went on the Duchess, "that a party of the Duke's political supporters should arrive here on New Year's Eve for a few days' shooting, and when they arrived they found Lady Lavinia, looking very pale and wan, ready to receive them."

"New Year's Eve? Just like to-day then!" exclaimed the eldest son of the house, Lord Ardvilly.

The Duchess bent her head. "After dinner was over, at the invitation of their host, the whole party gathered together in what we now call the small hall, just outside this room, prepared to let the New Year in."

The Duchess waited a moment, and she heard her eldest daughter whisper to Gerald Arbuthnot: "In the old days, of which mother is talking, the door of what we now call the small hall was the main entrance to the Castle. That is why we always let the New Year in there."

"The clock struck twelve, the front door, as it was then, was thrown open, everyone wished everyone else a happy New Year, and then some of those present noticed that Lady Lavinia had vanished, and—*she was never seen again!*"

Gerald Arbuthnot leant forward eagerly. "Did anyone see her go through the open door into the night, Duchess?"

"No one saw her go out, and no one noticed when she left the hall.

But I ought in honesty to add, that she was not really missed till the next morning. Her father evidently believed that, still feeling the terrible

(Continued overleaf.)

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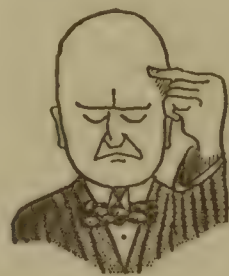
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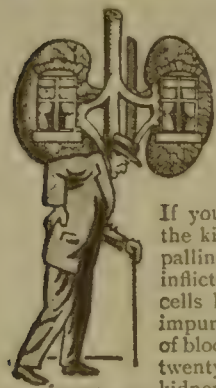
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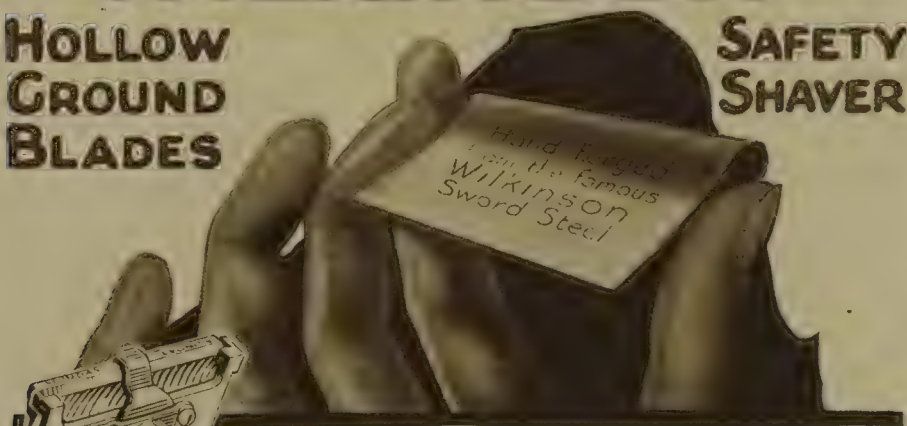
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weight of his displeasure, she had slipped away, unwilling to go through the jollification of seeing the New Year in. The majority of the guests only just knew her by sight, and her new maid had been told that she need not sit up. So it was not till the next day that she was known to have disappeared—and the moment of her disappearance is still, to this day, a mystery."

The Duchess looked round at the young faces turned towards her. She detected in most of them a slight touch of disappointment. They



The young lady from the Castle, her French maid, and the young shepherd, were seen once or twice together.

had hoped for something more exciting than a mere disappearance. But Lady Lavvy looked interested and excited, and Gerald Arbuthnot again leant forward eagerly: "Did she leave no word—no note?" he asked.

The Duchess hesitated before answering, and then: "It has always been my belief," she said, with a touch of reluctance, "that she did leave a letter for her father. But he never acknowledged that she had done so, while showing, at any rate during the first three or four days which followed her disappearance, a strange unwillingness to have her really searched for. Once the fact of her disappearance had been published abroad, however, the search was prosecuted in every possible way, all over the three kingdoms, and even on the Continent. I was looking last week through a packet of letters from the poor girl's aunt, and in one of them there is a hint that some people believed she had not gone very far, and that she was hidden comparatively close to her old home—that is, near here. I once talked to Dr. Agate's grandmother about it all, and she told me that her own father had organised a force of fifty men who had beaten every bush, not only in the park, but on all the wide downs and commons which surround the countryside of the park. One obvious theory was that she had wandered out, been killed, and her body hidden, for the sake of the jewels she wore on the night of her disappearance; not that these jewels were what we should now consider of real value."

"And no trace of her was ever found? How very, very extraordinary!" exclaimed the young man. He did not approve of an unsolved mystery.

"When the Duke told me the pitiful tale"—the Duchess was addressing him now, for she felt that he alone of her young audience was absorbed in her story, "he showed me a curious little handbill which was, it seems, distributed by the thousand, and in which Lady Lavinia was described—her name and rank *not* being given."

She got up and went and unlocked a drawer in the writing-table at which she often sat and wrote her letters. Then she came back and held out to her Lavinia's lover a small, shabby square of yellow paper.

ONE THOUSAND POUNDS REWARD.

The above reward will be given for information concerning a young woman who disappeared last New Year's Eve in Sussex. She is fair, with long pale-golden hair; her eyes are blue, her mouth is small—she has all her teeth. But the top of one of her fingers is missing. Speaks in a low, clear voice, but with a slight lisp. When last seen was wearing a white flounced muslin dress and a white, silk-fringed shawl. May be wearing a pale-blue plush bonnet with white ruching. Any information concerning her present whereabouts, dead or alive, married or single, should be sent to Messrs. J. P. Downing and Sons, 10, Chancery Lane, London.

"The top of one of her fingers missing!" exclaimed the young man.

"Yes, the top of the third finger of her left hand had been bitten off by a savage dog, when she was a child."

"I suppose there were many false clues—if only because of the reward?"

The Duchess told herself that it was nice of Gerald to be so interested. It made her feel as if he was becoming one of the family—at last.

"Hundreds of people came forward in the hope of getting the reward! But no trace of her was ever found, and, at the end of a year, poor Old Magnifico and his sons went into mourning, and an announcement of Lady Lavinia's death was published in the London papers. But her elder brother once admitted that this had only been done to stop idle gossip."

"What a strange, strange story!" muttered the young man.

Lady Lavvy crept close up to her mother. "Mother," she whispered. "Mother? I want to ask you something."

"Yes, my dear?"

"What became of the shepherd?"

The Duchess looked round. The children had melted away—the younger ones were playing hide-and-seek at the other end of the long library, and her eldest son and Gerald Arbuthnot had begun talking, apart.

"The shepherd," she whispered back in a very low voice, "disappeared about the same time. Some thought he'd gone to France after the maid—some, I fancy, thought otherwise."

III.

The Duchess got up. "Children! Children? It's ten minutes to twelve; we must go into the small hall!"

Her future son-in-law was the first to obey her call, and together they went through from the library into the beautiful vaulted chamber at one end of which was the huge, iron-studded door which Gerald Arbuthnot had never seen open.

"Now that we're so poor, and living entirely this side of the Castle, I think it would be a very sensible thing to go back to the old entrance," observed the Duchess. "It would be far more convenient for us, but, alas! not so convenient for the servants, so I suppose we shall have to stick to the grand entrance for ever and ever."

He said solemnly: "Wouldn't that be a pity?"

She answered his thought. "To give in to the servants? But they're our masters, after all, though very kind masters, and—"

He interrupted—it was a way he had, and a way which the Duchess found very tiresome. "The rising tide of democracy—" he began.

She cut him short, with a slight toss of the head. "Oh, no, Mr. Ar—I



"One Thousand Pounds Reward."

mean Gerald—it's nothing to do with the rising tide of democracy! Why, my own grandmother, in her day the most autocratic old woman in the three kingdoms, was terribly afraid of her maid. In fact, her maid was

[Continued overleaf.]

for grandma too!



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supposed to be the only person of whom she had ever been afraid—and she had had three husbands!"

And then silence fell upon them all till the clock in the bell-tower began to strike. When that happened, the eldest son of the house, together with Lady Lavvy's lover, walked to the great iron-studded door, undid the two heavy bolts, and turned the big key.

It all took a little longer than they expected, and the last stroke of twelve had fallen on the still air when the door swung slowly back, admitting a rush of icy wind. The Duchess drew her beautiful Spanish shawl more closely round her, and suddenly told herself how nice it is to be young, really young! Her children had all rushed forward, and were peering out eagerly, while her eldest son had actually stepped through on to the frozen snow. She could no longer see him. He was engulfed in the darkness.

For a moment the Duchess's heart stood still. Supposing he were to disappear now, for ever! What would happen to the happy House of Life in which she dwelt so securely? She visualised, with an almost terrible vividness, the scene of seventy years ago, when another party had been gathered here seeing the New Year in. And then, with a queer feeling of relief, she saw her darling, a slender, good-looking boy of nineteen, emerge from the blackness outside. For a moment he stood silent on what had been, for hundreds of years, the threshold of his home. Then he put up his hand.

"Mother!" he called out. "There's someone lying outside, on the snow. I think it's a child who must have lost her way coming across the park to night. Arbuthnot? Will you help me bring her in?"

They all ran out, and someone struck a match. Yes, lying there just outside the huge door, making a dark patch on the frozen snow, lay a



Her eldest son had actually stepped through on to the frozen snow.

At last the nurse stood up; she turned to her mistress. "She's dead, your Grace," she said in a low voice. "Not a doubt of it! It's

(Continued on page 58.)

piteous little figure. And while the two young men were lifting it up, the Duchess ran into the library and rang the bell. Then she sent off one of her little boys for the old nurse, who had now been for twenty-two years one of the props of her great household.

Coming back into the hall she heard Gerald Arbuthnot's voice exclaiming, "Put her down flat on the floor! That's always the best place for anyone who has fainted."

When this had been done they all drew near, to see that the unbidden guest was no child, but a tiny old woman, clad in workhouse dress. The shrunken face, framed in a round, old-fashioned quilted bonnet, had about it a certain austere dignity.

The Duchess knelt down on the stone flags and bent over the still, stark figure lying there.

"Poor, poor old thing! How can she have gone so far out of her way?"

Then she rose from her knees. "Do go, somebody, and hurry Nanna and Denham—"

But before anyone could obey her, the small hall was suddenly filled with men and maids, and soon they all stood round, mingled in one common humanity, while Nanna tried to force a few drops of the Duke's fine old liqueur brandy between the blue lips of the old woman lying on the floor.

"I wonder where she comes from, Denham?" the Duchess turned to the butler, always her friend in need.

"I expect from Manningford Workhouse, your Grace. They let out the old people now and again to see their friends. She must have been trying to make her way across the park, poor old thing, and then, deceived by the snow, came round in some way here."

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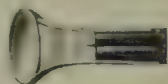
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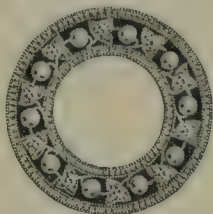
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bitter cold to-night, and the poor soul may have been lying there for hours."

The Duchess was looking with a perplexed feeling of doubt down into the small, wrinkled face. She told herself that Nanna, with all her knowledge, was very old-fashioned. They had wonderful new ways nowadays of bringing people back from apparent death.

She turned to the butler again, "Will you telephone and say that I shall be very much obliged if Dr. Agate could make it convenient to come as soon as possible."

The Duchess went back to the group of many people standing awestruck round the thin little figure stretched on the floor of the hall. "Children, you must all go off to bed quietly now, and you must only sing 'Old Lang Syne' in your hearts, to-night."

And then she turned to her eldest son. "I should like you and Gerald to carry her to the bed in the Queen's Room. It's the nearest bedroom to here, only just through the library. Also—" her eyes filled with tears—"I should not like to feel any dead woman so poor that we, at any rate, should not do her reverence."

Her son bent forward; impulsively he kissed her. He had been just too young to play any part in the war, and this was the first time he had seen death. He was deeply moved—far more moved than anything in his quiet manner showed. He looked round for his future brother-in-law. That composed young man was in a corner, talking to Lady Lavvy.

"Arbuthnot, my mother would like us to put this poor old woman

into a bedroom that's very seldom used. It's close by, just through the library."

There trembled on Gerald Arbuthnot's lips the words: "Oh, but surely we ought to leave her here till the doctor comes?" But, somehow, he did not utter them. Instead he helped the other to lift that which lay there at their feet, looking so light, so small, and yet, even to him, so awe-inspiring.

It was a slow-moving procession which went down the long library, and so into a broad corridor beyond, into which opened what was called 'The Queen's Room,' because Queen Victoria had slept there no fewer than seven times during her long reign.

"And now," said the Duchess, "I wish everyone to go to bed, except Denham. He will have to wait up for Dr. Agate, of course, and so must I."

After they had all obeyed her, she sat on in the library till she heard the firm, quick steps echoing through the hall which had seen so strange and sad a scene so short a time ago.

"Well, Duchess? This is a sad affair! Denham tells me that the poor old woman is dead, or, at any rate, that your nurse says so?"

The three of them, the butler, the doctor, and the Duchess, went to the Queen's Room. There the doctor bent down over the great canopied bed.

"There's nothing to be done!" he exclaimed at last, straightening himself.

The butler had slipped away unobtrusively, and, for a few moments the two that remained there stood silently looking down at the poor little stray remnant of humanity.

(Continued on page 5.)



Making a dark patch on the frozen snow, lay a piteous little figure.

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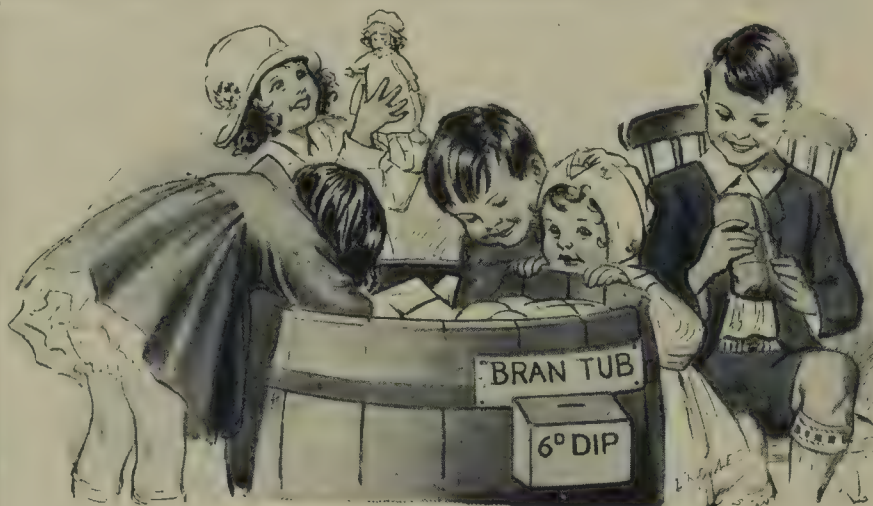


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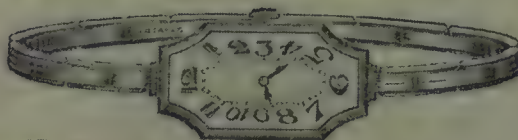
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It was the man who spoke first. "I will arrange for her to be taken away to the mortuary to-morrow morning."

"I would far rather she were left here! I can't bear the thought of the poor little creature being put in a mortuary. After all, she came here, to us, for shelter?"

Dr. Agate looked a little surprised. He had known the Duchess a great many years, he was truly attached to her, and he had never thought of her as being what he called to himself "foolishly sentimental."

"There will have to be an inquest, of course," he observed rather drily.

"But it could be held here—in the Castle, I mean?"

"It could be—certainly. But would the Duke like that?"

"The Duke always likes what I like," she said a little stiffly. And Dr. Agate felt, what he very seldom had occasion to feel—rebuked.

He bent down again over the great bed. "I see she wears a wedding ring," he observed; and then, in a tone of surprise, he added, "Why, the top of her wedding finger is off. What an extraordinary thing!"

The Duchess gave a sharp cry. It was clear that her nerves had been thoroughly upset by the sad end to her day.

"Are you sure?" she exclaimed in an agitated voice—"sure, Dr. Agate?"

"Sure?" He looked round at her puzzled. "Do you mean, am I sure that she is dead, Duchess? I haven't a doubt of it!"

"I don't mean that. I mean are you sure about her finger?—about the top of it being off?"

"Of course I'm sure! Would you like to see for yourself? There is nothing repugnant about it—I should judge it to have been cut off a great many years ago."

And then, with the tears rolling down her face, the Duchess, too, looked at the pathetic little stump circled by a worn wedding-ring.

"How strange," she murmured at last "how very, very strange!" and there came a perplexed, undecided expression over her face.

"Are you sure that there must be an inquest?" she asked suddenly.

"Quite sure; though, of course, it's obvious enough what happened.

The poor old soul—she must have been very, very old, by the way—lost her way when going across the park, and her death was due to the cold and exposure."

"I feel sure that the Duke will wish her to be buried in the Old Churchyard—I mean in our enclosure. I know that he would not like her—any more than I should—to be put in a pauper's grave."

Dr. Agate felt more and more surprised. He told himself that there was no accounting for the vagaries of women—or perhaps one ought to say for the vagaries of duchesses. This Duchess and he were good, as well as old friends, and he remembered with what courage and resignation she had taken the one great trouble of her married life—the death of a little girl of eighteen months. She had felt the loss most bitterly, yet she had been extremely unselfish and brave. Perhaps what had happened to-night had brought that sad time back to her mind? But surely, not even to humour his wife, would the Duke allow this poor old pauper to be buried in that portion of what was called the Old Churchyard where all his ancestors were buried.

"I will see the coroner to-morrow," he said soothingly, "and arrange for the inquest to be held here. Perhaps you would like me also to speak to the undertaker. I take it you would like just a plain coffin?"

"Yes," she said in a low voice, "quite a plain coffin. It has always shocked me that anyone could want anything else."

She walked back with him through the now dark and silent house, and, though Denham was in attendance, she herself saw the doctor into his two-seater. "Thank you very much," she murmured, "and a very Happy New Year to you, my dear, kind friend."

About ten o'clock the next morning the Duchess was told that Dr. Agate wished to speak to her Grace on the telephone. She was with the Duke when she received the message, and he saw that she looked worried, undecided, uncomfortable.

"Would you rather I went?" he said, very gently for him. "Hadm't I better speak to him, my darling?"

She shook her head. "No, you'd better keep out of it all. Besides, you hate the telephone!"

But Dr. Agate had very little to say. "I thought you would like to know something further about that poor old woman," he began—"though it's only a very little page from what someone

[Continued overleaf.]

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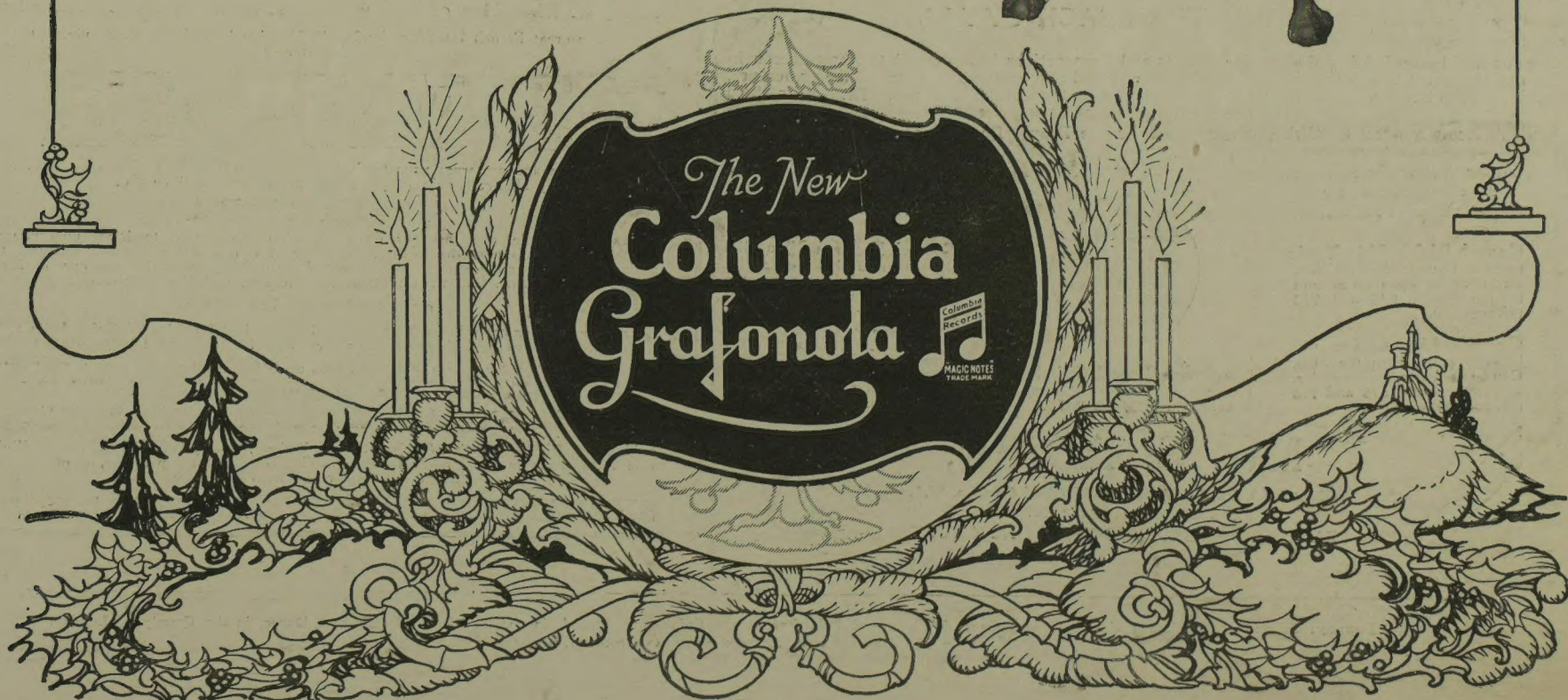
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once called 'the simple annals of the poor.' The Master of Manningford Workhouse thinks she was Scotch by birth, for her name was Macdermott. She and her husband—a very dour Scot, it seems—settled here some twenty-five years ago. Until before the war they lived in a singularly lonely place—a two-roomed cottage at the top of the second down. There seems little doubt that they had saved some money, though they were reduced to sore straits before the old man's death. She lived on for a while all by herself, and people—I mean, of course, the people of her own class—were very kind and generous to her, as they so often are to one another. And then, when during the war the food question became acute, one of her cronies persuaded her to go into the workhouse. She became a great favourite there, it seems. Like so many Scotchwomen of that type, she was well educated, and she used to read to the other old people. She gave her age when she came in as seventy-five, but the Master thinks she was a good deal older than that. He suspects she was close on ninety when she died. Lately her mind had been going a little, and that perhaps accounts for her having wandered into the park, which was, of course, quite out of her way for Manningford. I have arranged for the inquest to take place to-morrow at twelve. Do you still wish it to be held in the Castle?"

"Certainly I do," called back the Duchess, "for the Duke and

I both feel that we should not like her to be moved more than must be."

"And about the funeral?" the doctor went on. "I suggest that the funeral shall follow on the inquest as soon as possible.

How about the day after to-morrow—early in the morning? Do you still wish her to be buried in your enclosure?"

Again she said "Certainly we do. And—Dr. Agate?"

"Yes, Duchess?"

"Don't let the funeral be too early. We shall all go to it, and I'm sure the upper servants will want to go, too."

He did not allow the surprise he felt to appear in his voice. "Then shall I say about eleven o'clock on Wednesday?"

"Yes, that will do very well. And, Doctor, one word more?"

"Yes," he called out. "Yes?"

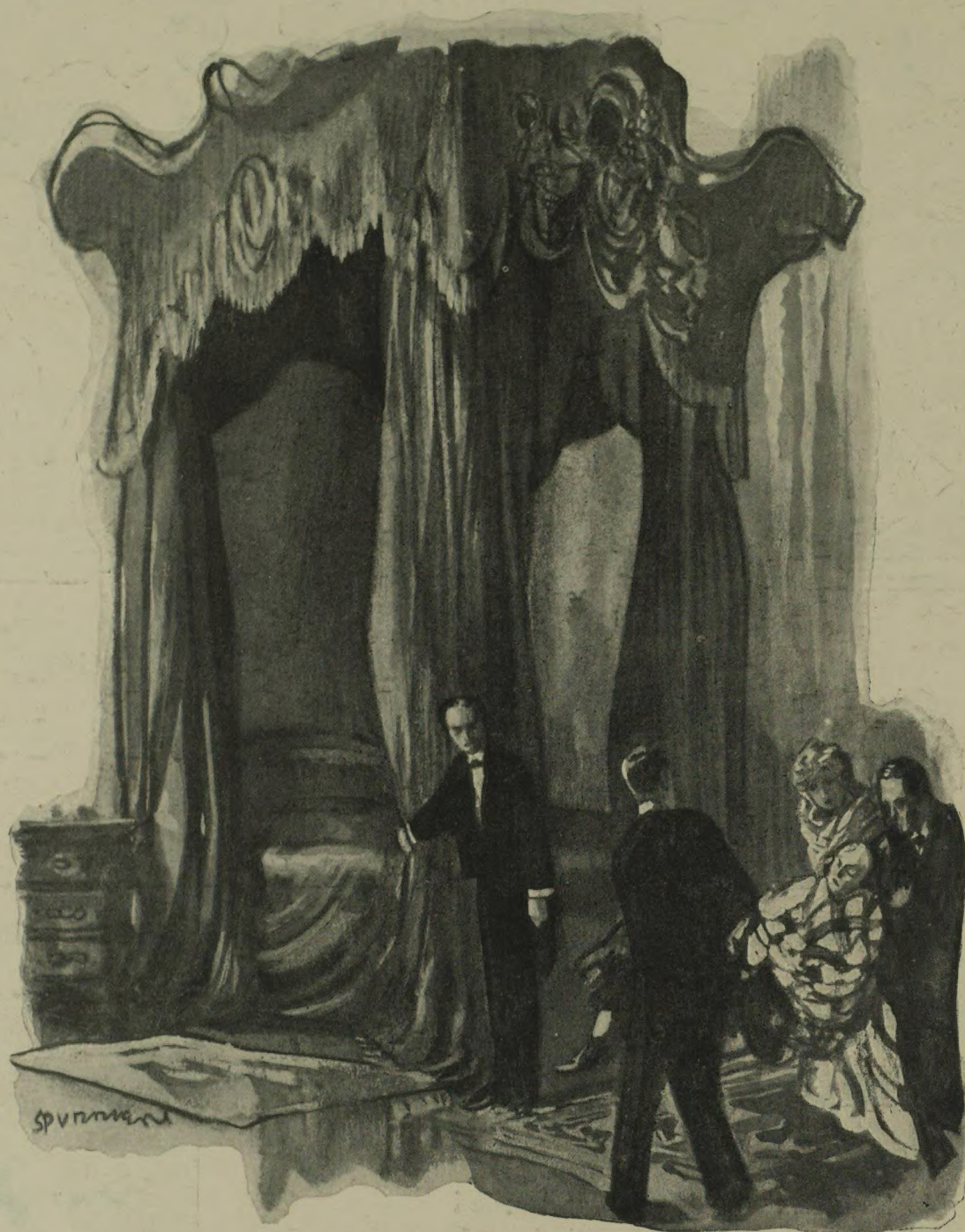
"What was her Christian name?"

"Her Christian name?" He hesitated. "Now let me see—it was rather a peculiar one for a person of her class. Lavinia—yes, that was it! Lavinia Macdermott was the name under which she was admitted to Manningford Workhouse about five years ago."

Two days later, Gerald Arbuthnot, while following the poor old pauper woman's plain

oak coffin up the stone paths of what was now called the Old Churchyard, told himself that the world does move after all, for was he not now witnessing an example—albeit in a very unexpected place—of the true brotherhood of man?

[THE END.]



It was a slow-moving procession which went down into "The Queen's Room."

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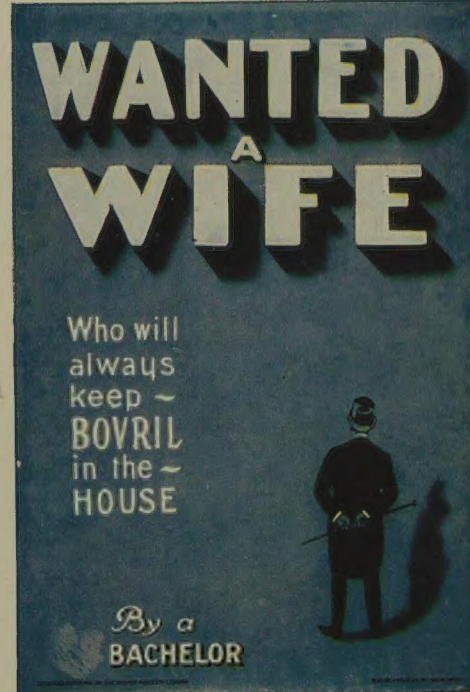
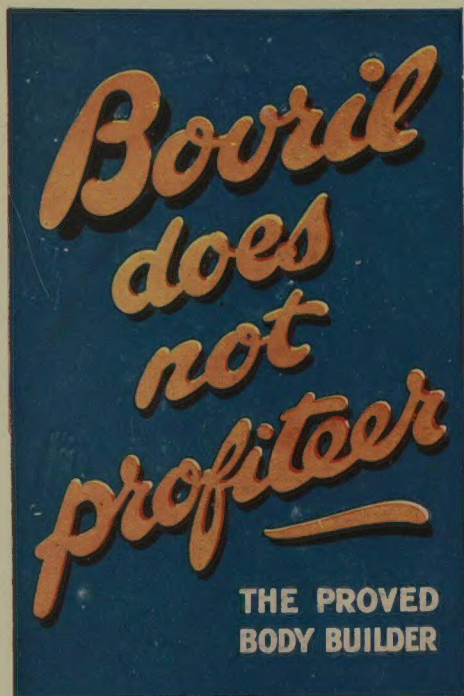
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